

Engraved for
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Edition.

SELECT FABLES
 OF
ÆSOP
 AND OTHER FABULISTS
 IN THREE BOOKS
 BY R. DODSLEY.

Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air
Replenish'd, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee? know'st thou not
Their language and their ways? Thou also know'st
And reason not contemptibly: with these
I'm in possession. Paradise Lost b. 8 l. 370.

A NEW EDITION.



L O . I . D O . A :

THE

PREFACE.

THE Fables of Esop have always been esteemed the best lessons for youth, as being well adapted to convey the most useful maxims, in a very agreeable manner. Accordingly, many writers, both in verse and prose, have endeavoured to clothe them in an English dress. It would ill become the Author of this work to animadvert upon their labours: but he thinks it may be said with truth, and he hopes with modesty, that nothing of this kind, which has been published in prose, can justly discourage him from the present undertaking.

In forming this collection, he has endeavoured to distinguish, by two separate Books, the respective compositions of the earlier and later mythologists; and he trusts it will not be found that he has often been mistaken in this distribution, though an error of that kind might perhaps appear of no great importance. His principal aim was to select such Fables as would make the strongest and most useful impressions on the minds of youth; and then to offer them in such unaffected language, as might have some tendency to improve their style. If in this he should be allowed to have at all succeeded, the work, it is presumed,

will not be unserviceable to young readers, nor wholly unentertaining to persons of maturer judgment.

To these he has ventured to add a third Book, consisting entirely of original Fables; and he offers it to the Public with all the diffidence which ought to accompany modern productions, when they appear in conjunction with writings of established reputation. Indeed, whatever hopes he has, that the present work may be favourably received, arise chiefly from the consideration, that he has been assisted in it by gentlemen of the most distinguished abilities; and that several, both of the old and the new Fables, are not written by himself, but by authors with whom it is an honour to be connected; and who having condescended to favour him with their assistance, have given him an opportunity of making some atonement for his own defects.

The life of Esop prefixed to the former editions of these Fables, having been thought not so full and satisfactory as it might have been, a learned and ingenious friend has been so kind as to consult the ancient writers who have made any mention of Esop. He hopes he has added many facts and anecdotes of his life, not hitherto taken notice of; and that he has set his character in a clearer and better light than it has hitherto appeared.

A NEW

LIFE OF ESOP.

IN recording the lives of such persons as have made themselves remarkable only by their writings, and who flourished at a very wide distance from our own times; the great difficulty, in general, is to collect sufficient memorials: but in giving an account of Esop, there arises a particular difficulty, from the many falsehoods which have been so long and so confidently asserted concerning him. I shall therefore first endeavour to clear the ground from these; and then to collect from writers of good credit what may be related of him with more probability.

The great distorter both of Esop's life and person, is one Planudes; an eastern monk, who lived at Constantinople (*a*) toward the end of the 14th century. He published several Fables in Greek, under the name of Esop, and prefixed a life of him to his edition of them; in which he is supposed (*b*) by very good judges, to have confounded the oriental fabulist, Lokman, with Esop; and to have attributed what may have been true of the former, to the latter. Lokman (*c*) is described as deformed; of a black complexion

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(*a*) Fabricius says he flourished in the year 1380. *Bibl. Græca*, Lib. 3. cap. 28. p. 693.

(*b*) Sale's *Koran*, p. 335.

(*c*) *Ibid*.

with thick lips, and splay feet: Planudes has since formed his picture of Esop; and the artists have been too ready to follow his description of him (*d*) almost ever since. Planudes, as usual, does this without any authority from the Greek and Roman writers, who preceded him; and takes the same liberty, in making Esop travel into Assyria and Egypt. He has not only abused his person, but represents him more like an idle buffoon, than a man of deep morality, and great wisdom, which seems to have been his true character. Planudes is also (*e*) supposed to have written many of the Fables himself, which he gave to the world as Esop's: and, indeed, his fictions very often betray their author, who was a mean writer as well as a false one. In the Fables he makes Esop quote (*f*) Euripides, who was not born till almost 80 years after his death; and speaks of the (*g*) Piræus as the port of Athens, which did not exist till above 80 years later. Demades the rhetorician, is the subject of one of them; who was a rival of Demosthenes, and consequently lived above 150 years

(*d*) Alsop, although a writer on the side of Mr. Boyle, in the famous dispute with Dr. Bentley, prefixed a picture of Esop to his Fables, in which he is represented as a handsome person.

(*e*) By Vavaffor; *de ludicra dictione*, p. 21. and Henry Stevens; who in his *Thesaurus Linguae Græcæ* has never quoted his Fables. Bayle, Art. *Æsop*. Note K.

(*f*) Bayle, Art. *Æsop*. Note B. (*g*) Ibid. Note K. 42.

after Esop: and in the moral of another, he goes so far as to mention (*h*) the order of monks, which did not subsist till near a thousand years after him. In the same manner, in the life of Esop, he makes him go to the court of Nectanebus in Egypt, whereas Nectanebus did not reign there till 200 years afterwards: he carries him likewise to that of king Lyceus at Babylon, who never reigned there at all; and indeed is only a king of his own creation.

From all those fictions, mistakes, and absurdities, when considered together, it must sufficiently appear, that Planudes ought to be rejected, as an evidence of no credit at all; and I shall therefore, in the following account, lay him entirely aside: together with Philostratus's tale of Mercury's visit to Esop, in the early part of his life, and those other legendary stories of his being engaged (*i*) in two battles, and writing two books, after he was dead.

To leave these wild and visionary writers for something more certain, it appears from authors of very good credit, that Esop flourished in the (*k*) time of the seven famous Sages of Greece: and notwithstanding almost

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(*h*) He also makes him use words and sentiments in the scripture style rather than the heathen. Bayle, Note K. 43.

(*i*) Meziriac's life of Esop, chap. 8.—Both mentioned by Bayle; Art. *Æs.* Notes C. and N.

(*k*) Laertius, in Chilo.

as many (*l*) countries might lay in their claim for him, as there were cities which contended for being the birth-place of Homer, he was most probably a native of Phrygia. Many authors affirm it, in general; and one in particular, says, that he was born in (*m*) Co-tiæum a city of that province in the Lesser Asia.

Esop was probably of low parentage; for the whole that we hear of him in his youth is, that he was a (*n*) shepherd's boy, and afterwards a slave. His first master, in that capacity, was (*o*) Caresias. of Athens.* In that city he had a fair opportunity of learning the Grecian language in its perfection. and there also he might be led to the thought of writing Fables, from the mode of instruction then in fashion, which was by conveying

(*l*) Maximus Tyrius names Sardis in Lydia, for the birth-place of Esop. Diff. 20. And Phrygia. Diff. 33.—Julian, the island of Samos. Orat. 7. p. 207.—Suidas, the island of Samos, &c.—The scholiast of Aristophanes, and Heraclides (in Gronov. Thes. Gr. Tom. 6. p. 2897.) Mesembria, a city in Thrace.—And besides several of the persons before mentioned, Lucian, Phædrus, Aulus Gellius, and Stobæus, speak of him as a Phrygian. So that the weight of authority is much the most prevalent for his being born in Phrygia; and if the account of the proverb (mentioned p. x.) be true, that alone would make all other authorities quite unnecessary.

(*m*) Suidas.

(*n*) Philostratus; in the life of Appolonius, Lib. 56. 5.

(*o*) Meziriac, ch. 2. from Aphthonius. Bayle calls him Carlius, as from Meziriac.

it in moral sentences, or proverbs : and a fable (in Æsop's manner) is nothing else but a story invented for that purpose. It is also said (and I think with very good reason) that Æsop chose this method (*p*) because his station as a slave would otherwise have weakened his authority ; which defect he was willing to supply by the strength and beauty of his allegories.

His next master after Caresias was (*q*) Xanthus ; and his third, Idmon, (*r*) surnamed the Wise, of the island of Samos. It was with the last, that he had the famous Rhodopis for his fellow slave, according to Herodotus and Plutarch ; and according to Pliny (*s*) she

(*p*) Meziriac, ch. 3.—probably from Phædrus Introd. to Lib. 3, ver. 33, to 38.

(*q*) Suidas.

(*r*) So Plutarch calls him ; *de ferâ numinis vindiçtâ*, p. 556, 557.—Herodotus calls him Jadmon, B. 2. c. 134.

(*s*) *Minimam ex his, (the pyramids of Egypt,) sed laudatissimam, a Rhodope meretricula factam, Ætopi, fabularum philosophi, conserva quondam, & contubernalis hæc fuit.* Plin. L. 36. c. 12.

Contubernalis signified of old the (wife, or) mate, of a slave—*Qualicumque villico contubernalis mulier assignanda est ; quæ contineat eum, & in quibusdam rebus adjuvet.* Columella. *de Re Rust.* L. 1. c. 8.—*Contubernalis mulier propriè dicitur fervi ; nam uxoris nomen in liberâ tantum ponitur.* Scævola, *de fidei Com.* Lib. Leg. Thais 45. §. 15.—*Contubernium propriè servile connubium.* Paul. Lib. Sent. 2. c. 10.

There is some reason to imagine they were a remarkably handsome couple : for as she is said to have had her name from the beauty of her complexion, he seems to me to have had his from the particular sparkling of his eyes.

was his wife, or mate, during his servitude there. It was the same Rhodopis, who afterwards became so celebrated, and so extremely (*t*) rich. Idmon was so much pleased with the behaviour and wisdom of Esop, that after having been some time in his service, he gave him (*u*) his liberty.

Esop, after having obtained his freedom gradually acquired so great a reputation, that at length he was considered as equal to the most celebrated (*u*) of the seven Sages of Greece, his contemporaries : so that what Horace said of Sertunius, perhaps in his humorous way, (*x*) " That he was the eighth of the wise men, might be said of Esop : very seriously ; nay, there are some who very much prefer his manner of instruction to that of the philosophers just mentioned, (*y*) and give good reasons for their opinion. He

(*t*) She made a noble present to the temple at Delphi, from the tenth of her substance, according to Herodotus ; and Pliny says she built one of the famous pyramids of Egypt. Nat. Hist. Lib. 36. c. 12. Herodotus says, the pyramid ascribed to her was built long before her time ; and that though she was very rich, she could not have been able to sustain the immense charge of that building. B. 2. ch. 134 and 135.

(*u*) Meziariac, ch. 4. from the Scholiast on Aristophanes Aves, Herodotus, and Plutarch.

(*v*) Meziariac, chap. 5.

(*x*) Hor. Lib. 2. sat. 3. 296.

(*y*) *Æsopus ille, e Phrygia fabulator, haud immerito sapiens exillimatus est : quum quæ utilia monitu suafuque erant non severè, non imperiosè, præcepit & sensuit, ut Plu-*

was well acquainted with those great men, particularly with Solon and Chilo. He was received with them in the court (z) of Periander, King of Corinth, who himself was one of the number; and in that of Cræsus, King of Lydia, in his capital of Sardis. He was much beloved (a) by that prince; and it was in his court that Esop shewed he had more wisdom, or at least more political wisdom, than all of them, on the following occasion: Cræsus (b) after having shewn these Sages the magnificence of his court, and the vastness of his riches, asked them, "Whom they thought the happiest man?" Some of them named one, and some another: Solon (whom I think without injury we may look upon as superior to all the rest) in his answer gave two instances. The first was that of one Tellus, a poor Athenian, but of great virtue; who had eminently distinguished himself by his care and education of his family, and at last his life in fighting for his country: the other was of two brothers, who had given a very remarkable proof of their

lofophis mos est; sed festivos delectabilesque apologos commentus, res salubriter ac prospicienter animadvertas, in mentes animosque hominum cum audiendi quâdam illecebrâ induxit. Aulus Gellius, Noctes Art. L. 2. c. 29.

(z) Sent thither by Cræsus; Plutarch's *Convivium Sapient.*

(a) Suidas. Art. *Æsopas*.

(b) Meziriac, ch. 5.—Plutarch in the life of Solon.

filial piety, and were in reward for it taken out of this life by the gods, the very night after they had performed so dutiful an action : and concluded with adding, that he had given such instances, because no one could be pronounced happy before his death. Esop, who was one of the company, and perceived that the king was not well satisfied with any of their answers, being asked the same question, replied. " That for his part he was persuaded that Cræsus had as much pre-eminence in happiness over all other men, as the sea has over all rivers." The King was so much pleased with his compliment, that he eagerly pronounced that sentence, which afterwards became a common proverb, " The Phrygian has hit the mark ! " Soon after this happened, Solon took his leave of Cræsus ; and was dismissed very coolly. Esop, on his departure, accompanied him part of his journey ; and as they were on the road, took an opportunity of saying to him, " O Solon, either we must not speak to kings, or we must say what will please them." " On the contrary," replied Solon, " we should either not speak to kings at all, or we should give them good and useful advice." (c) So great was the steadiness of the chief of the Sages, and such the courtliness of Esop.

(c) Plutarch's Life of Solon.

Meziriac, in his Life of Esop (*d*) seems, like a true Frenchman, to be pleased with him for this instance of his complaisance. He says, that “his residing in the court of so mighty a King as Croesus, rendered him more polite than most of the other Philosophers of his time; more compliant with the humour of princes; and more reconciled to monarchical government.” Esop gave another instance of the latter, in a visit which he made to Athens; soon (*e*) after Pisistratus, by his artifices practised on the people, had attained the highest point of his ambition, and made himself master of his country. The people repented of what they had done, and began to murmur: Esop, on this occasion, instead of inventing a Fable to show Pisistratus how glorious it would be for him to restore liberty to the Athenians, composed one to persuade that people to submit quietly to the power which he had usurped over them. It is one of the first of those which Phædrus has translated from Esop. In his introduction to it, Phædrus (*f*) intimates that Pisistratus was a good prince; and it is very true, that in his administration (*g*) he was not a bad one; but had not Esop been so well reconciled to monarchical government, as Meziriac thinks, and as Plutarch (*h*) proves, he was;

(*d*) Chap. 5. (*e*) Phædrus, Lib. 1. Fab. 2, 6. (*f*) *ib.*

(*g*) Plutarch, in his Life of Solon.

(*h*) In the little dispute between him and Solon at the banquet of the Sages, p. 151, C. &c.

he would naturally have taken the part of the enslaved people, rather than that of their enslaver.

Esop, however, in all instances where courts and the masters of them were not concerned, seems to have gone as far in the pursuit of wisdom as any of the Sages. When (*i*) Chilo, one of the seven, asked him, while yet but a young man, "What God was doing?" Esop immediately answered, "That he was depressing the proud, and exalting the humble:" an answer, which Mr. Bayle calls (*k*) wonderful; and descants very largely upon it. Remarkable too was his idea of the miseries of mankind, as appears from an observation he frequently made, (*l*) "That Prometheus, having taken earth to form mankind, tempered and moistened it, not with water, but with tears." From this little specimen of his sentiments and reflections (*m*) one cannot but regret our not having a greater number of them preserved to us.

(*i*) Laertius. Art. Chilo.

(*k*) Bayle, Art. *Æsop*. Note I.

(*l*) Mez. ch. 6. From Themistius: Orat. 32.

(*m*) His idea in relation to proper relaxations of the mind is expressed in the strongest oriental way by Phædrus, in the fourteenth Fable of his third Book; and he makes him speak with a great air of authority on other occasions; where he represents him as wiser than all the people of Athens taken together.

O si maneret condito sensus patri

Quam graviter ferret, quod voluntatem suam

Interpretari non potuissent Attici!

Lib. 4. Fab. 4.

Esop dedicated his services, in the latter part of his life, to Cræsus; and after some other embassies or employs, was sent by that monarch (*n*) to the city of Delphi, with a large sum of money, in order to offer magnificent sacrifices to Apollo, and to distribute (*o*) four minæ of silver to each citizen. During his residence among them, he conceived so great a dislike to the manners and morals of the Delphians, and spoke of their misconduct with so much freedom, that he extremely provoked them. Among other things, he reproached them with having scarcely any arable land; and observed, “That were it not for the great concourse of strangers, and the vast offerings made in their temple, they would soon be reduced to the extremity of hunger.” Not satisfied with offending them in words, he proceeded to deeds; for having performed the sacrifices in the manner that Cræsus had ordered, he sent back the rest of the money to the city of Sardis, as judging the Delphians not worthy to partake of the King’s liberality. This irritated them against him to such a degree, that they consulted how they might be revenged; and accordingly entered into a conspiracy to take away his

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(*n*) Scholiast on Aristophanes’s *Wasps*, ver. 1437, and Plutarch on the Certainty of the Divine Vengeance, though deferred, tom ii. p. 557.

(*o*) Twelve pounds a man; the silver mina being twelve ounces, or three pounds of our money; according to Ainsworth.

life by a notorious piece of villany. They hid among his baggage one of (*p*) the golden vessels consecrated to Apollo; and soon after Esop was set out on his return, they dispatched messengers after him, who overtook him in his way to Phocis, charged him with the theft; and on searching, produced the vessel which they themselves had procured to be secretly conveyed into his baggage. Upon this pretence they immediately drag him to Delphi, throw him into prison, accuse him of sacrilege, and sentence him to be precipitated from the rock Hyampia; which was their usual punishment for sacrilegious persons. As they were on the point of throwing him down the rock, he obtained leave to speak in his defence; and delivered, in his usual manner, a Fable. It was that of the Eagle (*q*) and the Beetle; the purport of which was to show, “That the weakest may sometimes procure vengeance against the most powerful, when greatly injured by them:” but the enraged Delphians paid no regard either to his Fable, or its Moral. They only increased their clamours against him; and without any mercy hurried him

(*p*) Aristoph. and Theraclides, in Gronoy. Thes. Gr. tom. 6. p. 2830.

(*q*) Mentioned by the Scholiast on Aristoph. In Pace V. 177, and Vesp. 1437. That Scholiast gives us the Fable itself, in a manner a good deal different from the modern way of telling the story; but I should imagine not in so good an one. Esop probably told it himself.

down the precipice. However, Heaven, (as the old writers observe) did inflict that vengeance on the Delphians which he had thus, in a sort of prophetic spirit, foretold. Their land was rendered barren ; and they were afflicted with many strange distempers, for several years afterwards. In this distress they consulted the oracle ; and were answered, that all their miseries were owing to the unjust condemnation and death of Esop. In consequence of this answer, they caused a proclamation to be made by sound of trumpet, at some of the most public feasts and general meetings of the Greeks ; that “ whoever bore any relation to Esop, and would demand satisfaction for his death, was desired to come and exact it from the Delphians, in what manner he pleased.” There was none who pretended to any right in this affair, till the third generation : when a Samian appeared, named Idmon ; (*r*) a grandson of that Idmon who had been master of Esop, in the island of Samos : and the Delphians having made him the satisfaction he desired, were delivered from their calamities.

According to Eusebius, the death of Esop happened in the (*s*) fourth year of the fifty-

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(*r*) Herodotus ; and Plutarch, *de ferâ numinis vindictâ*.

(*s*) Bayle. Art. *Æsop*. Note C. Meziriac says, the first of the fifty-fourth Olympiad, chap. vi.

fourth Olympiad ; which was 561 years before the Christian *Æra*.

If we were to follow probability rather than the assertions of some writers in the lower ages, I should be more apt to think that Esop was of a handsome countenance and shape, than ugly and deformed ; notwithstanding the general prepossession to the contrary, which has prevailed for the three or four last centuries. There is no author quoted as saying any thing to the disadvantage of Esop's person, till after the fall of all the arts and sciences ; and almost a thousand years after his death. The first writer quoted in support of this groundless opinion is Stobæus (*t*) who has it from I don't know whom ; and what is said by this unknown person, relates only to the air of Esop's (*u*) countenance ; for there is not a word intimated of his resembling an Ethiop, or of his being deformed in any part of his body. Planudes was the first who propagated any fancies of the latter kind ; and that probably from his taking (*x*) another person for Esop ; and not

(*t*) Esop died 561 years before our *Æra*, and Stobæus (according to Blair's Tables) lived in the beginning of the fifth century after Christ.

(*u*) He says, that Esop being reproached for having a foul countenance, answered, " Regard not my looks, but my mind." This anonymous authority from Stobæus, I should think might be much over-balanced by that of Philostratus, who lived long before Stobæus ; and in his picture of Esop gives him a pleasing countenance, even while he is meditating.

(*x*) See p. i.

till (*x*) about two thousand years after the death of this celebrated mythologist. There is no occasion to oppose this notion of Planudes by searching for any express authorities against him; it having been so fully proved before (*y*) that he has totally destroyed all his own credit himself.

Philostratus in his (*z*) account of several pictures in the time (*a*) of the Antonines, gives us one, in which Esop is the principal figure. The painter represents him before his own house; there the Geniuses (*b*) of the several sorts of Esopian Fables approach him with pleasure and regard, as the chief inventor and writer of Fables. As such they adorn him with wreaths of flowers, and crown him with olive-branches. He has a pleasing smile upon his countenance; and at the same time his eyes are fixt upon the ground, as

b 3.

(*x*) He flourished 1941 years after the death of Esop. See note (*a*) p. i.

(*y*) See p. iv. and v. (*z*) In Icon. Art.

(*a*) From the year 138 to 179 of our *Æra*.

(*b*) There were probably three of these Geniuses in the picture; the Esopian Fables being divided into three sorts. "The rational, in which Men only are introduced; the charactered, were only Beasts, under characters assigned to them; and the mixt, in which both Men and Beasts are concerned." From Aphthonius, in *Præexercitum*: one of the Testimon. in Nevelet's edition.

The Genius of each sort of the lesser Fables is made to attend Esop here, as persons; in the same manner that the Genius of the greater, or Epic Fable attends Homer, in the famous relievo of his Apotheosis.

being then composing a Fable ; and composing it (c) with that humour and gaiety for which he was so remarkable. There are several men, and several beasts intermixt, that form a sort of circle round him ; and among the latter, the Fox is particularly distinguished ; Esop making as much use of him in his Fables, as the dramatic writers do of Davus in their Comedies. There is a great deal of sense (says Philostratus) exprest in the picture in general ; and particularly, in the looks and attitudes of the three Geniuses, that are paying their regards to him.

In this picture the countenance of Esop is very well represented, as partly pleasant and partly grave ; but Plutarch has given us a much fuller and stronger picture of his thoughts and manner of conversation. 'Tis in his Feast of the Sages, at the court of Periaander, King of Corinth, who himself was one (d) of the seven. As this is perhaps one of the most valuable remains of antiquity that is left to us, and as Esop has a considerable share in it, I shall take the liberty of inserting it very much at large ; though it will bear no proper proportion to the rest of his life : but I think it cannot be unaccept-

(c) This seems to be the intent of the painter, though Philostratus gives another turn to it.

(d) The other six are Thales, Solon, Cleobulus, Chilo, Bias, and Pittacus : to whom, says Laertius, some add Anacharsis the Scythian, Muso the Kenean, Perecydes the Syrian, Epimenides of Crete, and Pisistratus the tyrant of Athens. In proem. § 13.

able to the reader; and heartily wish, that the whole was translated into English by some abler hand.

Periander, while the rest of the wise men were all in his court, invites them, and several (*c*) others, to a feast in one of his pleasure-houses, near the city of Corinth, where he was to make a (*f*) particular sacrifice to Venus. It was at the foot of Licæum, or eastern promontory of the Corinthian Isthmus; a place naturally very delightful (*g*) and much assisted by art: for Periander was a (*h*) lover of magnificence; which, together with his being a tyrant, may possibly account for Lucian's (*i*) excluding him from his Ely-

(*c*) Besides Periander, and the six Sages (first mentioned in the note before) there were Esop, and Anacharsis the Scythian; Melissa, the wife of Periander; Eumetis her attendant, daughter of Cleobulus, one of the Sages, and herself sometimes called Cleoboline, or the Little Female Sage: Naucratis (also called Niloxenus) sent to consult Bias, and his brethren, by Amasis King of Egypt; Mnesiphilus, from Athens; Diocles, a priest and augur, in Periander's service; Ardalus, priest of the temple of the Muses, founded by one of his ancestors; Chersias, a poet; and Cleodemus, a physician.

(*f*) Periander had left off paying any devotions to Venus, ever since his mother had put an end to her life for love; and this was his first return to them, upon some dreams of his wife Melissa. Xylander's Plutarch, fol. vol. 2. p. 146, D.

(*g*) Pausanias, in Corinthiacis.

(*h*) Plutarch, p. 148, B.

(*i*) Lucian says, he saw Anacharsis, Zamolxes, Numa, Lycurgus, Phocion, and Tellus, in Elysium; "and all the

sium. Periander ordered a chariot for each of the invited guests, to convey them to the place. When that which was provided for Thales arrives, he smiles ; is very much obliged, but chooses to walk through the fields. He does so ; and two (*k*) other of the guests accompany him. In their walk, they meet with Alexidemus, natural son of the tyrant of Miletus, returning from the villa, in a very great heat. A place it seems, at the lowest table, had been assigned for him, and he could not bear to sit beneath “ Æolians and Islanders, and (*l*) people that nobody knows.” They pass him, and laugh at his folly. When they come to the dining-room, Thales asks aloud, “ Which was the place his countryman had refused ? ” and when it was showed to him, sits down in it. Esop opens the conversation ; and in order to ridicule the behaviour of Alexidemus, begins with telling a Fable of the arrogant Mule mortified. After the tables were cleared, and garlands distributed to each of the guests by Melissa, the wife of Periander, Anacharsis says something, a little severely, on the Grecian fashion of using musical instruments in their worship of the Gods : and as

seven Sages, except Periander.” Tom i. p. 674, Ed. Blacu.

(*k*) Diocles, the priest and augur ; and Naucratis, the ambassador from Amasis, King of Egypt.

(*l*) Plutarch, p. 148, F.

this might have produced too serious a debate, Esop turns it off (*m*) with a jest.

One of this venerable company was Naukratites, sent by Amasis, King of Egypt, to consult Bias; and the other wise men on a letter he had received from the King of Ethiopia. It was a custom amongst the learned in those days, to send (*n*) wise sentences, and puzzling questions, to one another; and this intercourse was carried on even between persons of different nations. This letter was of the latter kind; and required Amasis to drink up the sea. It is read, and (*o*) the difficulty evaded by Bias. Cleodemus, the physician, speaks very justly against these difficult and puzzling questions; but is as unkind in

(*m*) Plutarch, p. 150, E.

(*n*) The taste of the knowing, in Esop's time, was to study rules for the conduct of life; and to make wise sentences, or proverbs, for the same purpose. At their tables, they often put questions of this sort to be answered severally, by as many as chose to do it. They also sent moral questions, from one kingdom to another; and sometimes puzzling, or enigmatical questions to be resolved. The letter sent by Amasis to Bias was one of the latter kind; and the question proposed after it, of the former: Plutarch, 151, C.

These puzzling questions, though much inferior to the other sort, were not a corruption of them in these times; but of the greatest antiquity, as we find by the contention between Homer and Hesiod; Plutarch in Conviv. Sap. p. 154.) and the riddle, which Samson puts to the Philistines, 1141 years before our *Æra* (Judges xiv. 14.)

(*o*) Plut. 151, C.

specifying, "That they were like Eumetis's riddles and fit only to be played with by women." Eumetis (who was present as an attendant on Melissa, and was a lady of the greatest sweetness, modesty, and wisdom) at first seemed inclined to answer him; but restrained herself, and blushed. Esop, with great good-nature, saved her from part of her confusion, by making a jest upon the physician and his practice; and by that means called off the eyes of the company from her to him.^(p) Periander then desires each of them to contribute some wise sentence for the benefit of Amasis and the company. Solon, Bias, Thales, Anacharsis, Cleobulus, Pittacus, and Chilo, gave each of them a piece of advice for Kings; and Periander being prest to add his, said, "That the sentences which they had given, were almost sufficient to deter any man of sense from reigning." Esop, on this, speaks of the civility due to princes; digresses into a little dispute with Solon about the preference of monarchical to republican government; but for fear it should grow too serious, soon turns it off (in his usual way) with a piece of humour. Naucratices then resumes his business, and mentions ^(q) some other questions from Amasis, which are answered by Thales. As the messenger from Amasis had now dispatched all his orders,

^(p) Plutarch, 152, D.

^(q) Ibid. 153.

Mnesiphilus the Athenian proposes to the company, (*r*) that as they had before given their thoughts of what might be useful to Kings, they would not give them, as to what might be beneficial to commonwealths; (*s*) and the Sages speak each on this subject, in a sententious manner.

Then Diocles, the priest and augur of Perriander, proposes (*t*) that they may say something on the government of a house and family; since each of the company present had a house to govern. “I deny that,” says Esop, “for Anacharsis here has only a (*u*) cart.” Anacharsis answers him in his usual grave and solid manner, and desires that his answer to him may at the same time pass as his (*w*) club toward what was proposed by Diocles. The rest of the Sages give their sentences, or sentiments, severally, on the same subject.

Here Melissa and Eumetis (*x*) withdraw; the company falls into a mixt conversation; and Esop, who had been blamed himself before for a digression from the subject then in hand, tells them a (*y*) Fable of the Wolf and Shepherds, to show that they themselves were now guilty of the same fault. Soon

(*r*) Plutarch, 154, C.

(*s*) Ibid. 154, D. and E.

(*t*) Ibid. 155, A.

(*u*) Anacharsis was a Scythian; and that people had no fixed habitation: but lived in a sort of waggons, to shift their places of abode whenever they chose to do so.

(*w*) Plutarch, p. 155, B.

(*x*) Plutarch, 155, D.

(*y*) Ibid. 156, A.

after this, (*z*) the subject of œconomics is resumed ; and Cleobulus being asked, what is a competency ? begins with mentioning an old vulgar story, about making a coat for the moon ; and a Fable of Esop's, on a Dog's contracting himself in winter, and extending himself in summer : and this inquiry about a competency, leads them into (*a*) a fuller consideration of temperance and aliments.

In the close of this, Gorgias, the brother of Periander, comes in from a voyage ; and gives an (*b*) account of the wonderful preservation of Arion, by the Dolphins, who carried him to shore, when flung into the sea. Esop (*c*) (whether in jest or seriously) does not seem to believe it : Diocles, in answer to him, refers to the preservation of Phryxus and Helle ; and Solon says, “ These things are above our reach, and must be left to the Gods.” Several other stories (*d*) are told of persons assisted by Dolphins ; and Anacharsis reasons, (as is his way) very gravely and finely, upon Providence. On their inquiry's growing too nice, and particular, and Esop's quoting several verses out of Homer, Solon takes hold of that opportunity to quote a verse of Homer too, to put them in mind of its drawing toward bed-time. He (*e*) then

(*z*) Plutarch, 157, A.

(*a*) Ibid. 157 to 160.

(*b*) Ibid. 160 to 162.

(*c*) Plutarch, 162, B.

(*d*) Ibid. p. 163.

(*e*) Ibid. p. 164.

proposes a sacrifice ; which they perform and depart.

It appears upon the whole, from what is (*f*) recorded by Plutarch on this occasion, that Esop's conversation consisted of a mixture of humour, wit, mirth, and good-nature ; and the adapting, or making of Fables upon the spot, as occasions arose : and immediately after the perusal of this piece, it first came into my thoughts, that Esop was perhaps a man as full of wit and humour as our celebrated Dr. Swift ; for he scarce ever speaks without exercising one or other of those talents. He might possibly have been as (*g*) satirical too, though in a more gay and less disobliging manner : and, indeed, his good-nature is pointed out as strongly as any part of his character. (*h*) His wisdom itself was gay and cheerful ; and it was for that very reason, that he has been so often preferred to all the seven Sages of Greece. He was free and open in his discourse : for he speaks frequently ; and though there were so many in company (*i*)

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(*f*) Plutarch, in the entrance on this subject, says, there had been false accounts published of it ; and proposes his as a true one.

(*g*) Plut. p. 152.—Derisor potiùs, quàm deridendus Senex, Phæd. lib. 3. fab. 14.—For a remarkable instance of his humour, very like Dr. Swift, see the same, lib. 3. fab. 5.

(*h*) In his rescuing a lady of so charming a character as Eumetis from her confusion, p. 152, D.

(*i*) See note *c*, p. xix.

and so many of high rank and figure, he has (in a manner) the first and last word in their conversation. Plutarch too confirms what has been observed (*k*) by others ; that he was very free in intermixing his fables, even in the most common and familiar parts of his discourse.

I have (*l*) already mentioned the reason why Esop might choose to write Fables : and though he certainly was not (*m*) the inventor, he excelled all others so greatly in that way of writing, that he has generally (*n*) been regarded as such ; and is called so by several,

(*k*) In particular, by Priscian. See below, note *n*.

(*l*) P. vii.

(*m*) Priscian mentions Archilochus, as a writer of Fables, who flourished above a century before Esop. (Bayle, Note A.) Quintilian speaks of Hesiod as the first inventor of them, (*id. ib.*) who was two centuries earlier than Archilochus ; and the Fable of Jotham recorded in Scripture (Judges, ch. ix, v. 8—20) is almost three centuries earlier than Hesiod.

(*n*) *Illæ quoque fabulæ, quæ etiam si originem non ab Æsopo acceperunt, (nam videtur earum primus auctor Hesiodus) nomine tamen Æsopi maximè celebrantur ; ducere animos solent, præcipuè rusticorum & imperitorum : qui et simplicius, quæ ficta sunt, audiunt ; & capti voluptate, faciliè iis quibus delectantur consentiunt. Quintilian, Instit. Or. Lib. 5. c. 11.*

Priscian, in speaking of Fable, calls Esop the inventor of it ; but soon after he corrects himself, and adds, *Usi sunt eâ vetustissimi quoque autores ; Hesiodus, Archilochus, Plautus, Horatius. Nominantur autem ab inventoribus fabularum, aliæ Æsopiæ, aliæ Cypriæ, aliæ Lybiciæ, aliæ Sybariticæ ; omnes autem communiter Æsopiæ, quoniam*

even of the ancient writers. It appears very plainly from the words of (c) Socrates and

c 2

in conventibus frequenter, solebat Æsopus fabulis uti.
From Bayle, Art. Æsop. Note A.

Nunc fabularum cur sit inventum genus
Brevi docebo, Servitus obnoxia :
Quia quæ volebat non audebat dicere,
Affectus proprios in fabellas transtulit ;
Calumniamque fictis elusit jocis :
Ego porro illius semitâ feci viam.

Phædrus, Introd. Lib. 3. ver. 30.

Avienus says, in the Pref. to his Fables, Hujus materiæ ducem nobis Æsopum noveris : qui responso Delphici Apollinis monitus, ridicula orsus est, ut legenda firmaret. From Bayle, Note A. And Apollonius in Philostratus says, "That Æsop, not content with rejecting the fabulous stories of the poets, in favour of wisdom, invented a new method." B. 5. ch. 5. From the same, Note H.

As the word Ridiculous is always used in a bad sense in English, it may not be improper to observe, that Ridiculous in Latin was used in a good sense, as well as in a bad ; and it is to be taken in the former, in the quotation here from Avienus. 'Tis as much a commendation of Æsop, as the Festivus et Delectabilis of Gellius, p. xviii. Note 23 ; or the Hilariora Studia of Seneca, p. xlviii. Note 6. Thus, where Horace is preferring the humourous sort of satire to the severe, he says,

Ridiculum acri
Fortius ac melius magnas plerumque fecat res.

Lib. 1. Sat. 10. ver. 15.

And Phædrus, speaking of Æsop's works, attributes half of their merit to this :

Duplex libelli dos est ; quod risum movet,
Et quod prudenti vitam consilio monet.

Introd. Lib. 1. ver. 4.

(c) Socrates, in Plato's Phædo.

(*p*) Phædrus, each of whom translated some of the Fables of Esop, that he wrote them in prose ; though the invention which generally attends them, and which is the more essential part in poetry, made the former regard them as a poetical work.

The distinguishing character of Esop's style seems to have been that of an (*q*) elegant simplicity ; it was very (*r*) plain, short, and clear ; and his writings have been highly admired for their good sense and usefulness, in all ages. The plans of his Fables are com-

(*p*) *Æsopus auctor quam materiam repperit,
Hanc ego POLIVI versibus senariis.*

Phædrus, Introd. Lib. 1. ver. 2.

(*q*) Quisquamne ita nitet, ut comparatus tibi non sordet ? Quis ita ad *Æsopi* venustatem, quis ad sophisticas *Isocratis* conclusiones, quis ad enthymemata *Demosthenis*, aut opulentiam, *Tullianam*, aut proprietatem nostri *Maronis* ; quis ita affectet singula, ut tu imples omnia. *Ausonius*, in his Epistle to *Symmachus* : vol. 2. p. 642. Ed. Var.

(*r*) This appears very evidently, even from the imitations of his writings. Phædrus's style has commonly been admired for its particular simplicity and neatness ; and he says, very strongly, that he imitates Esop in his manner, as well as in his matter.

Librum exarabo tertium *Æsopi* stilo.

L. 3. Prol. ver. 30.

Laertius has preserved a couplet in *Socrates's* translation of one of his Fables ; remarkable only for its particular plainness.

And the Fables which *Plutarch* (in his banquet of the Sages) has put into Esop's own mouth, are remarkably short and clear.

mended for the same (*s*) elegance as his style. He has been highly admired for his writings of this kind in all ages. Quintilian recommends then (*t*) as the first object in the instruction of children; and Plato, when he is banishing the fabulous stories of Homer and (*u*) Hesiod, advises the use of this sort of Fables in his commonwealth; in both of which he is strongly followed by (*w*) Philostratus; who says, "That they were more proper than all other Fables, to inspire us with wisdom. The Athenians in the age when learning was at its greatest perfection among them, shewed their high opinion of Esop, and his writings, by the (*x*) noble statue they

c 3

(*s*) In quibusdam (fabulis) et argumentum ex ficto locatur, et per mendacia ipse relationis ordo contexitur; ut sunt illæ Æsopi Fabulæ; elegantia fictionis illustres. Macrobius, in Somn. Scrip. Lib. 1. cap. 2.

(*t*) Æsopi fabellas, quæ fabulis nutricularum proximè succedunt, narrare sermone puro et nihil se supramodum extolente, deinde eandem gracilitatem illo exigere condiscant. Institut. Orat. 1. c. 9.

(*u*) Plato De Republica. Lib. 2.

(*w*) Philostratus; Book 5. ch. 5.

(*x*) Æsopo ingentem statuam posuere Attici.

Phædrus, Epil. to B. 2. ver. 1.

The Greeks used to set up statues, larger than the life, to compliment their kings, heroes, and gods: of this kind the statue here mentioned, in honour of Esop, seems to have been.

They set up at the same time, seven statues to the famous contemporary Sages of Greece; and this statue of Esop at the head of them all.

erected to his memory, and by the celebrated sculpture (*y*) they employed for that purpose.

The great excellence of his way of writing, consists in blending of (*z*) the agreeable and the instructive so well together: from which Horace might possibly take the hint for that rule, which he seems to distinguish (*a*) as the most considerable of any in his Art of Poetry.

'Tis no wonder that works so useful, so pleasing, and so much recommended, were in every body's hands: they were so especially at Athens (*b*), the great seat of science; and about the time, that arts (*c*) and know-

(*y*) The great Lyfippus.

(*z*) Thus, where Phædrus says, that he imitates Esop. in his 1st book of Fables, he immediately adds,

Duplex libelli dos est; quod risum movet,
Et quod prudenti vitam consilio monet.

Introd. to B. 1. ver. 4.

A. Gellius prefers him to all the philosophers on this very account; and Avienus attributes so happy a thought to an inspiration from Heaven: (Note 86.) Apollonius did the same, though in a different manner; (Philostratus, B. 5. ch. 5.) the latter supposing this light to have been given him by Mercury, and the former from the oracle at Delphi.

(*a*) Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci;
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.

De Art. Poet. ver. 343.

(*b*) It was a proverbial expression there, for a man who was entirely ignorant; "That he had never read Esop." The reason of this proverb (as the commentator on Aristophanes, says) was "their reading him there with eagerness."

(*c*) The Athenians paid that signal compliment to Esop of setting up his statue above those of all the seven Sages,

ledge were both at their greatest height. The Fables of Æsop was, generally, the first book (*d*) which was read by their youth, and, perhaps, one of the last, which some of them quitted.

(*e*) Plutarch mentions Æsop among the authors most proper for forming philosophers; and indeed his distinguishing character was wisdom, attended (as has been shewn before) with a perpetual flow of pleasantry. Phædrus calls him, (*f*) the Sage; and says (*g*), “That he saw through all Nature.

It must be very difficult, at this distance of time, to determine which of the Greek Fables, that are published as Æsops, were really of his writing. Several of them may be so; but we do not know how to distinguish them. I should think it more easy to catch him at the rebound; I mean, in the profest translations of him. Phædrus, the (*h*) first of

in that great age in which Lyfippus and Apelles, and Aristotle, Plato, and Xenophon flourished.

(*d*) Fabulas primum tradere pueris solent——; quia animos eorum, adhuc molles, ad meliores facile vias instituunt vitæ. Priscian.

(*e*) De Audiendis Poetis.

(*f*) Sophus. Phæd. Lib. 3. Fab. 14. ver. 9.

(*g*) —————Naris emunctæ senex.

Natura nunquam verba cui potuit dare.

Id. Lib. 3. Fab. 3. ver. 15.

(*h*) Phædrus, after speaking of Æsop, says,

Quoniam occuparet alter ne primus forem,

Ne solus esset studui.

Close to B. ii. ver. 6.

the Roman poets who wrote Fables, begins with informing his reader that he has (*i*) turned into verse several of those which (as was remarked before) were written in prose by Æsop. He confirms this frequently afterwards, in general; and has pointed out some in particular, as translated from Æsop. He makes mention of these much oftener (*k*) toward the beginning of his work, than in the following parts of it; and I am apt to think, that most of the fables (*l*) in the last book are of his own invention. Avienus, the next

'Tis probable that Phædrus had not published his Fables, when Seneca wrote his consolation to Polybius, towards the latter end of the reign of Claudius: for that philosopher says in it to his friend: *Non audeo te usque eo producere, ut fabellas quoque, & Æsopæos logos, intentatum Romanis ingeniis opus solitâ tibi venustate connectas: difficile est quidem, ut ad hæc hilariora studia jam vehementer percussus animus tam cito possit accedere.* Seneca, Consol. ad Pol. c. 27.

(*i*) Phædrus Introd. to B. 1. ver. 2.

(*k*) L. 4. Fab. 2. 3. & 10.—L. 4. Fab. 16. He mentions Æsop and his actions in several others; but does not say those Fables themselves are taken from his. One would think, however, from what he says, Lib. 4 Fab. 20. that most of the foregoing Fables were taken from Æsop.

Quid judicare cogitur Liver modò,
Licet dissimulet, pulchrè tamen intelligo.
Quicquid putabit esse dignum memoriæ,
Æsopi dicet; si quid minùs adriserit,
A me contendet fictum quovis pignore;
Quem volu refelli jam nunc responso meo:
Sive hoc ineptum, sive laudandum est opus,
Invenit ille, nostra perfecit manus.

(*l*) From the Introd. to Lib. 5.

Latin Fabulist that I know of, though at the distance of several (*m*) centuries, agrees with Phædrus in professing to (*n*) follow Esop, and giving his book the title of Esopian Fables ; but does not point him out as the author of any one of them, in particular.

It has been already said (*o*), that Socrates translated some of his Fables. As the Athenians, not long after their putting that great man to death, grew as fond of his memory as they had been cruel to his person ; it is probable, that this might also add at the same time to their esteem for Esop and his writings. However that be, this is certain, that it was about fifty years after the death of Socrates, that they erected (*p*) the statue so much in honour of Esop ; and about a hundred, (*q*) that Demetrius Phalareus published an edition

(*m*) Avienus, according to Gyraldus, lived in the time of Theodosius and his sons. There are forty-two Fables in Elegiac verse, published as his, in Mattaire's Corpus Poet. Lat. vol. 2. p. 1338, &c.

(*n*) Hujus materiæ ducem nobis Æsopum noveris, From Bayle, Art. Æs. Note A.

(*o*) See note r, p. xxviii.

(*p*) Socrates was put to death 400 years before our Æra ; and Lysippus, who made this statue of Esop, was in the height of his reputation under Alexander the Great, whose reign was from 336 to 324 ditto.

(*q*) Demetrius Phalareus (according to Dr. Blair's Tables, whose authority is also followed in the preceding note) was banished from Athens 303 years before our Æra. Fabricius says, that he published a collection of Esopian Fables ; Art. Esop, Lib. 5. cap. 80 : and another volume either of his Fables, or of anecdotes relating to him. Ibid. cap. 81.

of his Fables; as Diagoras had indeed done long (*r*) before, while Socrates was living.

The Fables which Planudes published as Esop's, were printed at Milan in 1480; soon after the art of printing was introduced into Italy: and afterwards by Aldus, in 1505. This Aldine edition was followed by several others; and particularly by Robert Stephens, at Paris, in 1546. It contained 149 fables (*s*); to which Nevelet added almost as many more, from some manuscripts in the Heidelberg Library, in his edition at Francfort in 1610; but these manuscripts, (as well as that of Planudes) too often betray their true authors; for the Monks are commended in the 3rd and the 119th of these additional Fables. 'Tis a great pity that a more judicious collection should not be made from all the best and most authentic manuscripts that could be procured; and perhaps it should be chiefly from such as (*t*) are previous to the times of Planudes.

(*r*) Diagoras was banished from Athens in the 91st Olympiad; (from 416 to 413, before our *Æra*.) He published a collection of Fables (of the Phrygian, or Esop) according to Tatian, and Maximus Tyrius. See Laertius, Lib. 5. cap. 80.

(*s*) His addition made them in all 297. See Fabricius's Bib. Gr. Art. Esop.

(*t*) Mr. Boyle speaks of one of about 500 years old; which belonged to Vossius, and, as he says, was then at Leyden. Fabricius doubts it. Montfaucon, in his *Diarium Italicum*, promised to publish the Life of Esop, with the Fables, as they were extant before the time of Planudes, from a manuscript in the monastery of St. Mary at Florence. Fabricius, *ibid*.

AN
ESSAY
ON
FABLE.

INTRODUCTION.

WHOEVER undertakes to compose a Fable, whether of the sublimer and more complex kind, as the epic and dramatic ; or of the lower or more simple, as what has been called the Esopian ; should make it his principal intention to illustrate some one moral or prudential maxim. To this point the composition in all its parts must be directed ; and this will lead him to describe some action proper to enforce the maxim he has chosen. In several respects therefore the greater Fable and the less agree. It is the business of both to teach some particular moral, exemplified by an action, and this enlivened by natural incidents. Both alike must be supported by apposite and proper characters, and both be furnished with sentiments and language suitable to the characters thus employed. I would by no means however infer, that, to produce one of these small pieces requires the same degree of genius as to form an epic or dramatic Fable. All I would insinuate, is, that the apologue has a right to some share of our esteem, from the relation it bears to the poems before-mentioned, as it is honourable to spring from a noble stem, although in ever so remote a

branch. A perfect Fable, even of this inferior kind, seems a much stronger proof of genius than the mere narrative of an event. The latter indeed requires judgment: the former, together with judgment, demands an effort of the imagination.

Having thus endeavoured to procure these little compositions as much regard as they may fairly claim, I proceed to treat of some particulars most essential to their character.

SECTION I.

Of the Truth or Moral of a Fable.

TIS the very essence of a Fable to convey some moral or useful Truth beneath the shadow of an allegory. It is this chiefly that distinguishes a Fable from a Tale; and indeed gives it the pre-eminence in point of use and dignity. A Tale may consist of an event either serious or comic; and, provided it be told agreeably, may be excellent in its kind, though it should imply no sort of moral. But the action or Fable is contrived on purpose to teach and to imprint some Truth; and should clearly and obviously include the illustration of it in the very catastrophe.

The Truth to be preferred on this occasion, should neither be too obvious, nor trite, nor trivial. Such would ill deserve the pains employed in Fable to convey it. As little also should it be one that is very dubious, dark, or controverted. It should be of such a nature as to challenge the assent of every ingenious and sober judgment; never a point of mere speculation; but tending to inform or to remind the reader of the proper means that lead to happiness, or at least to

the several duties, decorums, and proprieties of conduct which each particular Fable endeavours to enforce.

The reason why Fable has been so much esteemed in all ages, and in all countries, is perhaps owing to the polite manner in which its maxims are conveyed. The very article of giving instruction supposes at least a superiority of wisdom in the adviser; a circumstance by no means favourable to the ready admission of advice. 'Tis the peculiar excellence of Fable to waive this air of superiority: it leaves the reader to collect the moral; who, by thus discovering more than is shown him, finds his principle of self-love gratified instead of being disgusted. The attention is either taken off from the adviser; or, if otherwise, we are at least flattered by his humility and address.

Besides, instruction, as conveyed by Fable, does not only lay aside its lofty mien and supercilious aspect, but appears drest in all the smiles and graces which can strike the imagination, or engage the passions. It pleases, in order to convince; and it imprints its moral so much the deeper, in proportion as it entertains; so that we may be said to feel our duties the very instant we comprehend them.

I am very sensible with what difficulty a Fable is brought to a strict agreement with the foregoing account of it. This, however, ought to be the writer's aim. 'Tis the simple manner in which the Morals of *Eiop* are interwoven with his Fables, that distinguishes him, and gives him the preference to all other Mythologists. His mountain delivered of a mouse, produces the Moral of his Fable, in ridicule of pompous pretenders; and his Crow, when she drops her cheese, lets fall, as it were by accident, the strongest admonition against the power of flattery. There is no need of a separate sentence to explain it; no possibility of impressing it deeper, by that load we too often see of accumulated reflections. Indeed the Fable of the Cock and the Precious Stone is in this respect very excep-

tionable. The lesson it inculcates is so dark and ambiguous, that different expositors have given it quite opposite interpretations; some imputing the Cock's rejection of the diamond to his wisdom, and others to his ignorance.

Strictly speaking then, one should render needless any detached or explicit Moral. Esop, the father of this kind of writing, disclaimed any such assistance. 'Tis the province of Fable to give it birth in the mind of the person for whom it is intended; otherwise the precept is direct, which is contrary to the nature and end of allegory. However, in order to give all necessary assistance to young readers, an Index is added to this collection, containing the Subject or Moral of each Fable, to which the reader may occasionally apply.

After all, the greatest fault in any composition (for I can hardly allow that name to riddles) is obscurity. There can be no purpose answered by a work that is unintelligible. Annibal Carracci, and Raphael himself, rather than risk so unpardonable a fault, have admitted verbal explanations into some of their best pictures. It must be confessed, that every story is not capable of telling its own Moral. In a case of this nature, and this only, it should be expressly introduced. Perhaps also where the point is doubtful, we ought to show enough for the less acute, even at the hazard of showing too much for the more sagacious: who, for this very reason, that they are more sagacious, will pardon a superfluity which is such to them alone.

But, on these occasions, it has been matter of dispute, whether the Moral is better introduced at the end or beginning of a Fable. Esop, as I said before, universally rejected any separate Moral. Those we now find at the close of his Fables, were placed there by other hands. Among the ancients, Phædrus; and Gay, among the moderns, inserted theirs at the beginning: La Motte prefers them at the conclusion; and Fontaine disposes of them indiscriminately, at the begin-

ning or end, as he sees convenient. If, amidst the authority of such great names, I might venture to mention my own opinion, I should rather prefix them as an introduction, than add them as an appendage. For I would neither pay my reader nor myself so bad a compliment, as to suppose, after he had read the Fable, that he was not able to discover its meaning. Besides, when the Moral of a Fable is not very prominent and striking, a leading thought at the beginning puts the reader in a proper track. He knows the game which he pursues: and, like a beagle on a warm scent, he follows the sport with alacrity, in proportion to his intelligence. On the other hand, if he has no previous intimation of the design, he is puzzled throughout the Fable; and cannot determine upon its merit without the trouble of a fresh perusal. A ray of light, imparted at first, may show them the tendency and propriety of every expression as he goes along; but while he travels in the dark, no wonder if he stumble or mistake his way.



SECTION II.

Of the Action and Incidents proper for a Fable.

IN choosing the action, or allegory, three conditions are altogether expedient. 1. It must be clear: that is, it ought to show without equivocation, precisely and obviously, what we intend should be understood. 2. It must be one and entire: that is, it must not be composed of separate and independent actions, but must tend, in all its circumstances, to the completion of one single event. 3. It must be natural; that is, founded if not on truth, at least on probability; on popular opinion; on that relation and analogy which things bear to one another, when we have gratuitously endowed them with the human faculties of speech and reason. And these conditions are taken from the na-

ture of the human mind ; which cannot endure to be embarrassed, to be bewildered, or to be deceived.

A Fable offends against perspicuity, when it leaves us doubtful what truth the Fabulist intended to convey. We have a striking example of this in Dr. Croxall's Fable of the creaking Wheel. " A Coachman, says he, hearing one of his Wheels creak, was surpris'd ; but more especially, when he perceived that it was the worst Wheel of the whole set, and which he thought had but little pretence to take such a liberty. But, upon his demanding the reason why it did so, the Wheel replied, that it was natural for people, who laboured under any affliction or calamity to complain." Who would imagine this Fable designed, as the author informs us, for an admonition to repress, or keep our complaints to ourselves, or, if we must let our sorrows speak, to take care it be done in solitude and retirement ? The story of this Fable is not well imagined : at least, if meant to support the Moral which the author has drawn from it.

A Fable is faulty in respect to unity, when the several circumstances point different ways, and do not center, like so many lines, in one distinct and unambiguous Moral. An example of this kind is furnished by La Motte in the observation he makes upon Fontaine's two Pigeons. " These Pigeons had a reciprocal affection for each other. One of them showing a desire to travel was earnestly opposed by his companion, but in vain. The former sets out upon his rambles, and encounters a thousand unforeseen dangers ; while the latter suffers almost as much at home, through his apprehension for his roving friend. However, our traveller, after many hair-breadth escapes, returns at length in safety back, and the two Pigeons are, once again, mutually happy in each other's company." Now the application of this Fable is utterly vague and uncertain, for want of circumstances to determine, whether the author designed principally to represent the dangers of

the Traveller ; his friend's anxiety during his absence ; or their mutual happiness on his return. Whereas, had the travelling Pigeon met with no disasters on his way, but only found all pleasures insipid for want of his friend's participation ; and had he returned from no other motive than a desire of seeing him again, the whole then had happily closed in this one conspicuous inference, that the presence of a real friend is the most desirable of all gratifications.

The last rule I have mentioned, that a Fable should be natural, may be violated several ways. 'Tis opposed when we make creatures enter into unnatural associations. Thus the Sheep or the Goat must not be made to hunt with the Lion ; and it is yet more absurd, to represent the Lion as falling in love with the Forester's daughter. 'Tis infringed, by ascribing to them appetites and passions that are not consistent with their known characters ; or else by employing them in such occupations as are foreign and unsuitable to their respective natures. A Fox should not be said to long for Grapes ; an Hedge-hog pretend to drive away Flies ; nor a Partridge offer his service to delve in a Vineyard. A ponderous iron and an earthen Vase should not swim together down a river ; and he that should make his Goose lay golden eggs, would show a luxuriant fancy, but very little judgment. In short, nothing besides the faculty of speech and reason, which Fable has been allowed to confer, even upon inanimates, must ever contradict the nature of things, or at least the commonly received opinions concerning them.

Opinions indeed, although erroneous, if they either are, or have been universally received, may afford sufficient foundation for a Fable. The Mandrake, here, may be made to utter groans ; and the dying Swan to pour forth her elegy. The Sphynx and the Phoenix, the Syren and the Centaur, have all the existence that is requisite for Fable. Nay, the Goblin, the Fairy, and even the man in the Moon, may have each his province

allotted him, provided it be not an improper one. Here the notoriety of opinion supplies the place of fact, and in this manner truth may fairly be deduced from falsehood.

Concerning the incidents proper for Fable, it is a rule without exception, that they ought always to be few ; it being foreign to the nature of this composition to admit of much variety. Yet a Fable with only one single incident may possibly appear too naked. If Esop and Phædrus are herein sometimes too sparing, Fontaine and La Motte are as often too profuse. In this, as in most other matters, a medium certainly is best. In a word the incidents should not only be few, but short ; and like those in the Fables of “ the Swallow and other Birds,” “ the Miller and his Son,” and “ the Court and Country Mouse,” they must naturally arise out of the subject, and serve to illustrate and enforce the Moral.



SECTION III.

Of the Persons, Characters, and Sentiments of Fable.

THE race of animals first present themselves as the proper actors in this little Drama. They are indeed a species that approaches, in many respects, so near to our own, that we need only lend them speech, in order to produce a striking resemblance. It would however be unreasonable to expect a strict and universal similitude. There is a certain measure and degree of analogy, with which the most discerning reader will rest contented : for instance, he will accept the properties of animals, although necessary and invariable, as the images of our inclinations, though never so free. To require more than this, were to sap the very foundations of allegory ; and even to deprive ourselves of half the pleasure that flows from poetry in general.

Solomon sends us to the Ant, to learn the wisdom of industry : and our inimitable ethic poet introduces Nature herself as giving us a similar kind of counsel.

Thus then to Man the Voice of Nature spake :
“ Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take—
“ There all the forms of social union find,
“ And thence let reason late instruct mankind.”

He supposes that animals in their native characters, without the advantages of speech and reason, which are assigned them by the Fabulists, may, in regard to Morals, as well as Arts, become examples to the human race. Indeed I am afraid we have so far deviated into ascetic appetites and fantastic manners, as to find the expediency of copying from them that simplicity we ourselves have lost. If animals in themselves may be thus exemplary, how much more may they be made instructive, under the direction of an able Fabulist ; who, by conferring upon them the gift of language, contrives to make their instincts more intelligible, and their examples more determinate ?

But these are not his only actors. The Fabulist has one advantage over all other writers whatsoever, as all the works both of art and nature are more immediately at his disposal. He has, in this respect, a liberty not allowed to epic, or dramatic writers, who are undoubtedly more limited in the choice of persons to be employed. He has authority to press into his service every kind of existence under heaven : not only beasts, birds, insects, and all the animal creation, but flowers, shrubs, trees, and all the tribe of vegetables. Even mountains, fossils, minerals, and the inanimate works of nature, discourse articulately at his command, and act the part which he assigns them. The virtues, vices, and every property of beings, receive from him a local habitation and a name. In short, he may personify, be-

slow life, speech, and action, on whatever he thinks proper.

It is easy to imagine what a source of novelty and variety this must open, to a genius capable of conceiving, and of employing, these ideal persons in a proper manner : what an opportunity it affords him to diversify his images, and to treat the fancy with change of objects, while he strengthens the understanding, or regulates the passions, by a succession of truths ! To raise beings like these into a state of action and intelligence, gives the Fabulist an undoubted claim to the first character of the poet, a Creator. I rank him not, as I said before, with the writers of epic or dramatic poems ; but the maker of pins or needles is as much an artist, as an anchor-smith : and a painter in miniature may show as much skill, as he who paints in the largest proportions.

When these persons are once raised, we must carefully enjoin them proper talks ; and assign them sentiments and language suitable to their several natures, and respective properties.

A Raven should not be extolled for her voice, nor a Bear be represented with an elegant shape. 'Twere a very obvious instance of absurdity, to paint an Hare, cruel ; or a Wolf, compassionate. An Ass were but ill qualified to be general of an army, though he may well enough serve perhaps for one of the trumpeters. But so long as popular opinion allows to the Lion, magnanimity ; rage, to the Tyger ; strength, to the Mule ; cunning, to the Fox ; and buffoonery, to the Monkey ; why may they not support the characters of an Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Ulysses, and Ther-sites ? The truth is, when Moral actions are, with judgment, attributed to the brute creation, we scarce perceive that Nature is at all violated by the Fabulist. He appears, at most, to have only translated their language. His Lions, Wolves, and Foxes, behave and

argue as those creatures would, had they originally been endowed with the human faculties of speech and reason.

But greater art is yet required, whenever we personify inanimate beings. Here the copy so far deviates from the great lines of Nature, that without the nicest care, reason will revolt against the fiction. However, beings of this sort, managed ingeniously, and with address, recommend the Fabulist's invention by the grace of novelty, and of variety. Indeed the analogy between things natural and artificial, animate and inanimate, is often so very striking, that we can, with seeming propriety, give passions and sentiments to every individual part of existence. Appearance favours the deception. 'The Vine may be enamoured of the Elm; her embraces testify her passion. 'The swelling Mountain may, natural enough, be delivered of a Mouse. 'The Gourd may reproach the Pine; and the Sky-rocket insult the Stars. 'The Axe may solicit a new Handle of the Forest; and the Moon, in her female character, request a fashionable Garment. Here is nothing incongruous; nothing that shocks the reader with impropriety. On the other hand, were the Axe to desire a fine perriwig, and the Moon petition for a new pair of boots; probability would then be violated, and the absurdity become too glaring.



SECTION IV.

On the Language of Fable.

THE most beautiful Fables that ever were invented may be disfigured by the Language in which they are clothed. Of this, poor Llop, in some of his English dresses, affords a melancholy proof. 'The ordinary style of Fable should be familiar, but it should also be elegant. Were I to instance any style that I should

prefer on this occasion, it should be that of Mr. Addison's little tales in the *Spectator*. That ease and simplicity, that conciseness and propriety, that subdued and decent humour he so remarkably discovers in those compositions, seem to have qualified him for a Fabulist, almost beyond any other writer. But to return :

The Familiar, says Mr. La Motte, to whose ingenious Essay I have often been obliged in this discourse, is the general tone, or accent of fable. It was thought sufficient, on its first appearance, to lend the animals our most common language. Nor indeed have they any extraordinary pretensions to the sublime ; it being requisite they should speak with the same simplicity that they behave.

The Familiar, also, is more proper for insinuation than the elevated ; this being the language of reflection, as the former is the voice of sentiment. We guard ourselves against the one, but lie open to the other ; and instruction will always the most effectually sway us, when it appears least jealous of its rights and privileges.

The Familiar style however that is here required, notwithstanding that appearance of Ease which is its character, is perhaps more difficult to write, than the elevated or sublime. A writer more readily perceives when he has risen above the common language, than he perceives, in speaking this language, whether he has made the choice that is most suitable to the occasion ; and it is nevertheless, upon this happy choice that all the charm of the familiar depends. Moreover, the elevated style deceives and seduces, although it be not the best chosen ; whereas the familiar can procure itself no sort of respect, if it be not easy, natural, just, delicate, and unaffected. A Fabulist must therefore bestow great attention upon his style ; and even labour it so much the more, that it may appear to have cost him no pains at all.

The authority of Fontaine justifies this opinion in regard to style. His Fables are perhaps the best examples

of the genteel familiar, as Sir Roger L'Estrange affords the grossest, of the indelicate and low. When we read that "while the Frog and the Mouse were disputing it at sword's point, down comes a Kite powdering upon them in the interim, and gobbles up both together to part the fray." And where the Fox reproaches "a bevy of jolly gossiping Wenches making merry over a dish of Pullets, that, if he but peeped into a hen-roost, they always made a bawling with their dogs and their bastards; while you yourselves, says he, can lie stuffing your guts with your Hens and your Capons, and not a word of the pudding." This may be familiar, but is also coarse and vulgar; and cannot fail to disgust a reader that has the least degree of taste or delicacy.

The style of Fable then must be simple and familiar; and it must likewise be correct and elegant. By the former, I would advise that it should not be loaded with figure and metaphor; that the disposition of words be natural; the turn of sentences, easy; and their construction, unembarrassed. By elegance, I would exclude all coarse and provincial terms; all affected and puerile conceits; all obsolete and pedantic phrases. To this I would adjoin, as the word perhaps implies, a certain finishing polish, which gives a grace and spirit to the whole; and which, though it have always the appearance of nature, is almost ever the effect of art.

But, notwithstanding all that has been said, there are some occasions on which it is allowable, and even expedient to change the style. The language of a Fable must rise or fall in conformity to the subject. A Lion, when introduced in his regal capacity, must hold discourse in a strain somewhat more elevated than a Country Mouse. The Lioness then becomes his Queen, and the beasts of the forest are called his Subjects: a method that offers at once to the imagination, both the animal and the person he is designed to represent. Again, the Buffoon-monkey should avoid that pomp of phrase, which the Owl employs as her best pretence

to wisdom. Unless the style be thus judiciously varied, it will be impossible to preserve a just distinction of character.

Descriptions, at once concise and pertinent, add a grace to Fable ; but are then most happy, when included in the action : whereof the Fable of Boreas and the Sun affords us an example. An epithet well chosen is often a description in itself ; and so much the more agreeable, as it the less retards us in our pursuit of the catastrophe.

I might enlarge much further on the subject, but perhaps I may appear to have been too diffuse already. Let it suffice to hint, that little strokes of humour, when arising naturally from the subject, and incidental reflections, when kept in due subordination to the principal, add a value to these compositions. These latter, however, should be employed very sparingly, and with great address ; be very few, and very short. It is scarcely enough that they naturally result from the subject : they should be such as may appear necessary and essential parts of the Fable. And when these embellishments, pleasing in themselves, tend to illustrate the main action, they then afford that nameless grace remarkable in Fontaine and some few others ; and which persons of the best discernment will more easily conceive than they can explain.



FABLES.



BOOK I.



FROM THE ANCIENTS.



FABLE I.

The Trees and the Bramble.

THE Israelites, ever murmuring and discontented under the reign of Jehovah, were desirous of having a king, like the rest of the nations. They offered the kingdom to Gideon their deliverer; to him, and to his posterity after him: he generously refused their offer, and reminded them, that Jehovah was their king. When Gideon was dead, Abimelech, his son by a concubine, slew all his other sons to the number of seventy, Jotham alone escaping; and by the assistance of the Shechemites made himself king. Jotham, to represent to them their folly, and to shew them, that the most deserving are generally the least ambitious, whereas the worthless grasp at power with eagerness, and exercise it with insolence and tyranny, spake to them in the following manner:

Hearken unto Me, ye men of Shechem, so may God hearken unto You. The trees, grown weary of the state of freedom and equality in which God had placed them, met together to chioote and to anoint a king over them : and they said to the Olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the Olive-tree said unto them, Shall I quit my fatness wherewith God and man is honoured, to disquiet myself with the cares of government, and to rule over the trees ? And they said unto the Fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the Fig-tree said unto them, Shall I bid adieu to my sweetness and my pleasant fruit, to take upon me the painful charge of royalty, and to be set over the trees ? Then said the trees unto the Vine, Come thou and reign over us. But the Vine said also unto them, Shall I leave my wine, which honoureth God and cheereth man, to bring upon myself nothing but trouble and anxiety, and to become king of the trees ? we are happy in our present lot : seek some other to reign over you. Then said all the trees unto the Bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the Bramble said unto them, I will be your king ; come ye all under my shadow, and be safe ; obey me, and I will grant you my protection. But if you obey me not, out of the Bramble shall come forth a fire, which shall devour even the cedars of Lebanon.



FABLE II.

The Frogs petitioning Jupiter for a King.

AS Esop was travelling over Greece, he happened to pass through Athens just after Pisistratus had abolished the popular state, and usurped a sovereign power; when perceiving that the Athenians bore the yoke, though mild and easy, with much impatience, he related to them the following fable:

The commonwealth of Frogs, a discontented, variable race, weary of liberty, and fond of change, petitioned Jupiter to grant them a king. The good-natured deity, in order to indulge this their request, with as little mischief to the petitioners as possible, threw them down a Log. At first they regarded their new monarch with great reverence, and kept from him at a most respectful distance: but perceiving his tame and peaceable disposition,

they by degrees ventured to approach him with more familiarity, till at length they conceived for him the utmost contempt. In this disposition, they renewed their request to Jupiter, and intreated him to bestow upon them another king. The Thunderer in his wrath sent them a Crane, who no sooner took possession of his new dominions, than he began to devour his subjects, one after another, in a most capricious and tyrannical manner. They were now far more dissatisfied than before; when applying to Jupiter a third time, they were dismissed with this reproof, that the evil they complained of they had imprudently brought upon themselves; and that they had no other remedy now but to submit to it with patience.





FABLE III.

The Belly and the Limbs.

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, a Roman consul, being deputed by the senate to appease a dangerous tumult and sedition of the people, who refused to pay the taxes necessary for carrying on the business of the state; convinced them of their folly, by delivering to them the following fable:

My friends and countrymen, said he, attend to my words: It once happened that the Members of the human body, taking some exception at the conduct of the Belly, resolved no longer to grant him the usual supplies. The Tongue first, in a seditious speech, aggravated their grievances; and after highly extolling the activity and diligence of the Hands and Feet, set forth how hard and unreasonable it was, that the fruits of their labour

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quandered away upon the insatiable craving of that indolent Paunch, which was entirely useless, and unable to do any thing towards helping himself. This speech was received with unanimous applause by all the Members. Immediately the Hands declared they would work no more; the Feet determined to carry no farther the load of guts with which they had hitherto been oppressed; nay, the very Teeth refused to prepare a single morsel more for his use. In this distress, the Belly besought them to consider maturely, and not foment so senseless a rebellion. There is none of you, says he, can be ignorant that whatsoever you bestow upon me, is immediately converted to your use, and dispersed by me for the good of you all into every Limb. But he remonstrated in vain; for during the clamours of passion, the voice of reason is always disregarded. It being therefore impossible for him to quiet the tumult, he starved for want of their assistance, and the body wasted away to a skeleton. The Limbs grown weak and languid, were sensible at last of their error, and would fain have returned to their respective duties; but it was now too late, death had taken possession of the whole, and they all perished together.



FABLE IV.

'The Wolf and the Shepherds.

HOW apt are men to condemn in others what they practise themselves without scruple!

A Wolf, says Plutarch, peeping into a hut, where a company of Shepherds were regaling themselves with a joint of mutton; Lord, said he, what a clamour would these men have raised, if they had caught Me at such a banquet!



FABLE V.

The Fox and the * Swallow.

ARISTOTLE informs us, that the following fable was spoken by Esop to the Samians, on a debate upon changing their ministers, who were accused of plundering the commonwealth.

A Fox swimming across a river, happened to be entangled in some weeds that grew near the bank, from which he was unable to extricate himself. As he lay thus exposed to whole swarms of flies, who were galling him and sucking his blood; a Swallow observing his distress, kindly offered to drive them away. By no means, said the Fox; for if these should be chased away, who are already sufficiently gorged, another more hungry swarm would succeed, and I should be robbed of every remaining drop of blood in my veins.

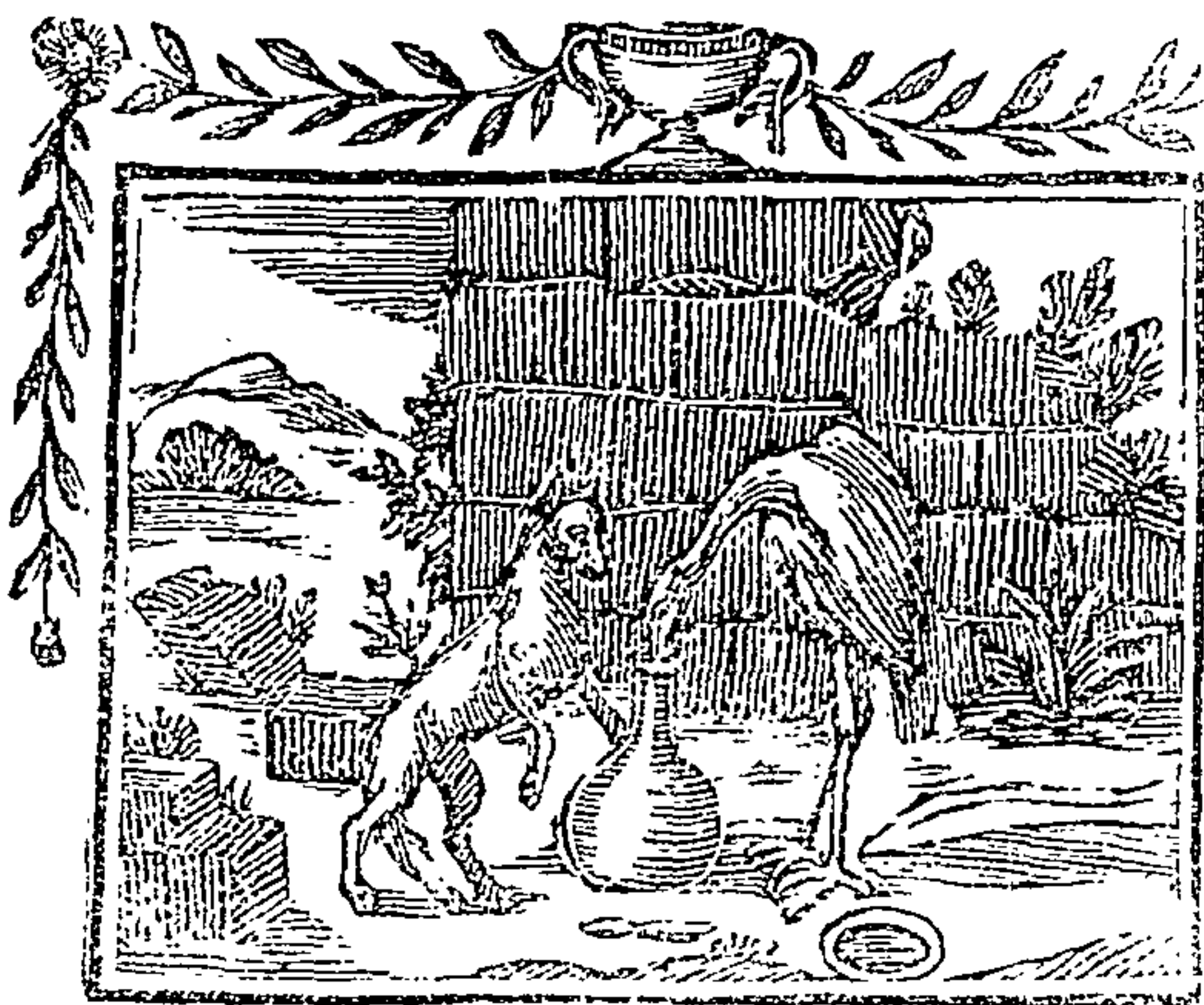
* Instead of the Swallow, it was originally a U. L. e-Hug; but as that creature seemed very unfit for the purpose of driving away flies, 'twas thought more proper to substitute the Swallow.



FABLE VI.

The Fox and the Raven.

A FOX observing a Raven perched on the branch of a tree, with a fine piece of cheese in her mouth, immediately began to consider how he might possess himself of so delicious a morsel. Dear madam, said he, I am extremely glad to have the pleasure of seeing you this morning; your beautiful shape, and shining feathers, are the delight of my eyes; and would you condescend to favour me with a song, I doubt not but your voice is equal to the rest of your accomplishments. Deluded with this flattering speech, the transported Raven opened her mouth, in order to give him a specimen of her pipe, when down dropt the cheese; which the Fox immediately snatching up, bore it away in triumph, leaving the Raven to lament her credulous vanity at her leisure.



FABLE VII.

The Fox and the Stork.

THE Fox, though in general more inclined to roguery than wit, had once a strong inclination to play the wag with his neighbour the Stork. He accordingly invited her to dinner in great form; but when it came upon the table, the Stork found it consisted intirely of different soups, served up in broad shallow dishes, so that she could only dip in the end of her bill, but could not possibly satisfy her hunger. The Fox lapped it up very readily, and every now and then, addressing himself to his guest, desired to know how she liked her entertainment; hoped that every thing was seasoned to her mind; and protested he was very sorry to see her eat so sparingly. The Stork, perceiving she was played upon, took no notice of it, but pretended to like every dish extremely; and at parting, pressed the Fox so earnestly to return her visit, that he could

not in civility refuse. The day arrived, and he repaired to his appointment; but to his great mortification, when dinner appeared, he found it composed of minced meat, served up in long narrow necked glasses; so that he was only tantalized with the sight of what it was impossible for him to taste. The Stork thrust in her long bill, and helped herself very plentifully; then turning to Reynard, who was eagerly licking the outside of a jar where some sauce had been spilled—I am very glad, said she, smiling, that you seem to have so good an appetite; I hope you will make as hearty a dinner at my table as I did the other day at yours. Reynard hung down his head, and looked very much displeased.—Nay, nay, said the Stork, don't pretend to be out of humour about the matter; they that cannot take a jest, should never make one.





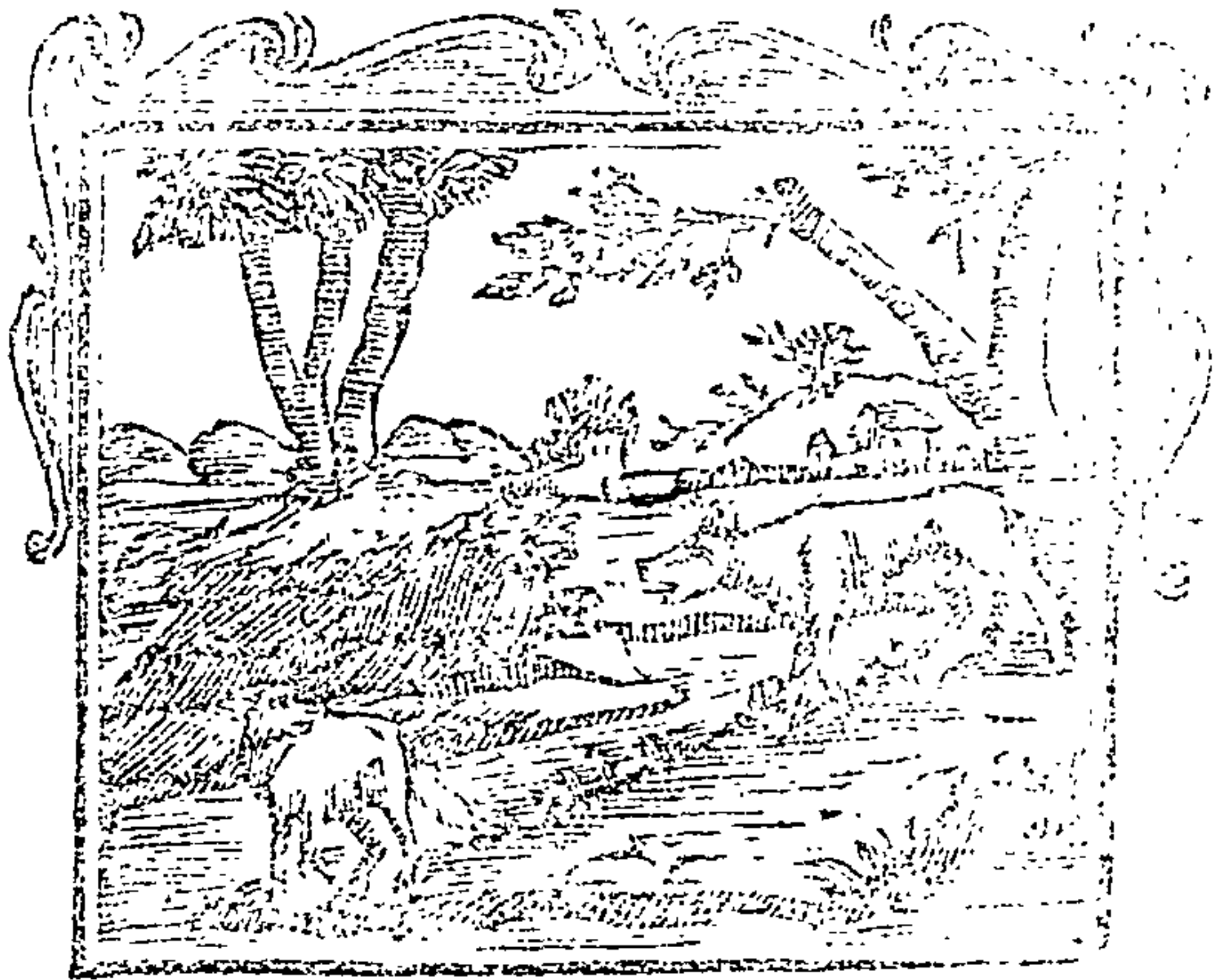
FABLE VIII.

The Daw with borrowed Feathers.

WHEN a pert young tempter, or city apprentice, sets up for a fine gentleman, with the assistance of an embroidered waistcoat and Dresden ruffles, but without one qualification proper to the character, how frequently does it happen, that he is laughed at by his equals, and despised by those whom he presumed to imitate!

A practical jay-daw was vain enough to imagine, that he wanted nothing but the coloured plumes, to render him as elegant a bird as the Peacock: puff'd up with this wise conceit, he dressed himself with a sufficient quantity of their most beautiful feathers, and in this borrowed garb, forsaking his old companions, endeavoured to pass for a Peacock: but he no sooner attempted to associate with these genteel creatures, than an affected strut be-

tried the vain pretence. The offended Peacocks, plucking from him their degraded feathers, soon stripped him of his finery, reduced him to a poor Jackdaw, and drove him back to his brethren ; by whom he was now equally despised, and justly punished with derision and contempt.



FABLE IX.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

WHEN cruelty and injustice are armed with power, and determined on oppression, the strongest pleas of innocence are preferred in vain.

A Wolf and a Lamb were accidentally quarrelling their thirst together at the same rivulet. The Wolf stood towards the head of the stream, and the Lamb at some distance below. The injurious beast, resolved on a quarrel, fiercely demanded—How dare you disturb the water which I am drinking?

ing? The poor Lamb, all trembling, replies, How, I beseech you, can that possibly be the case, since the current sets from you to me? Disconcerted by the force of truth, he changes the accusation: Six months ago, says he, you vilely slandered me. Impossible, returns the Lamb, for I was not then born. No matter, it was your father then, or some of your relations; and immediately seizing the innocent Lamb, he tore him to pieces



FABLE X.

The Mountain in Labour.

A RUMOUR once prevailed, that a neighbouring mountain was in labour: it was affirmed, that she had been heard to utter prodigious groans: and a general expectation had been raised, that some extraordinary birth was at hand. Multitudes flocked with much eagerness to be witnesses of the wonderful event; one expecting her to be delivered:

of a giant; another of some enormous monster; and all were suspended in earnest expectation of somewhat grand and astonishing. When after waiting with great impatience a considerable time, behold! out crept a Mouse.



FABLE XI.

The Boys and the Frogs.

ON the margin of a large lake, which was inhabited by a great number of Frogs, a company of Boys happened to be at play. Their diversion was duck and drake; and whole vollies of stones were thrown into the water, to the great annoyance and danger of the poor terrified Frogs. At length one of the most hardy, lifting up his head above the surface of the lake; Ah, dear children, said he, why will ye learn so soon the cruel practices of your race? Consider, I beseech you, that though this may be sport to you, 'tis death to us.



FABLE XII.

The Lark and her Young.

A LARK having built her nest in a field of corn, it grew ripe before her Young were well able to fly. Apprehensive for their safety, she enjoined them while she went out in order to provide for their subsistence, to listen very attentively to any discourse they might hear about reaping the field. At her return, they told her, that the farmer and his son had been there, and had agreed to send to some of their neighbours, to assist them in cutting it down the next day. And so they depend, it seems, upon neighbours, said the mother: very well: then I think we have no occasion to be afraid of to-morrow. The next day she went out, and left with them the same injunction as before. When she returned, they acquainted her, that the farmer and his son had again been there, but as none of their neighbours came to their assistance, they had deferred reaping till the next day, and intended to send for

help to their friends and relations. I think we may still venture another day, says the mother; but however, be careful, as before, to let me know what passes in my absence. They now remember that the farmer and his son had a third time visited the fields; and finding that neither friend nor relation had regarded their summons, they were determined to come the next morning and cut it down themselves. Nay, then, replied the Lark, it is time to think of removing: for as they now depend only upon themselves for doing their own business it will undoubtedly be performed.



FABLE XIII.

The Stag drinking.

A STAG quenching his thirst in a clear lake, was struck with the beauty of his horns, which he saw reflected in the water. At the same time, observing the extreme slenderness of his legs;

What a pity it is, said he, that so fine a creature should be furnished with so despicable a set of spindleshanks ! what a truly noble animal I should be, were my legs in any degree answerable to my horns ! In the midst of this soliloquy, he was alarmed with the cry of a pack of hounds. He immediately fled through the forest, and leaves his pursuers to get behind, that he might probably have escaped ; but taking into a thick wood, his horns were entangled in the branches, where he was held till the hounds came up, and tore him in pieces. In his last moments, he thus exclaimed—How ill do we judge of our true advantages ! the legs which I despise would have borne me away in safety, had not my favourite antlers betrayed me to ruin.



FABLE XIV.

The Swallow and other Birds.

A SWALLOW observing an husbandman employed in sowing hemp, called the little birds together, and informed them what the farmer was

about. He told them that hemp was the material from which the nets, so fatal to the feathered race, were composed; and advised them unanimously to join in picking it up, in order to prevent the consequences. The Birds, either disbelieving his information, or neglecting his advice, gave themselves no trouble about the matter. In a little time the hemp appeared above ground; the friendly Swallow again addressed himself to them, told them it was not yet too late, provided they would immediately set about the work, before the seed had taken too deep root. But they still rejecting his advice, he forsook their society, repaired for safety to towns and cities, there built his habitation, and kept his residence. One day, as he was skimming along the streets, he happened to see a large parcel of those very birds, imprisoned in a cage, on the shoulders of a bird-catcher. Unhappy wretches, said he, you now feel the punishment of your former neglect. But those, who, having no foresight of their own, despise the wholesome admonition of their friends, deserve the mischiefs which their own obstinacy or negligence brings upon their heads.





FABLE XV.

The Ass and the Lap-dog.

AN Ass, who lived in the same house with a favourite Lap dog, observing the superior degree of affection, which the little minion enjoyed, imagined he had nothing more to do, in order to obtain an equal share in the good graces of the family, than to imitate the Lap-dog's playful and endearing caresses. Accordingly, he began to frisk about before his master, kicking up his heels and braying, in an awkward affectation of wantonness and pleasantry : This strange behaviour could not fail of raising much laughter, which the Ass mistaking for approbation and encouragement, he proceeded to leap upon his master's breast, and began very familiarly to lick his face : but he was presently convinced, by the force of a good cudgel, that what is sprightly and agreeable in one way in another be justly censured as rude and impudent ; and that the surest way to gain esteem is for every one to act suitably to his own natural genius and character.



FABLE XVI.

The Lion and the Mouse.

A LION by accident laid his paw upon a poor innocent Mouse. The frightened little creature imagining she was just going to be devoured, begged hard for her life, urged that clemency was the finest attribute of power, and earnestly entreated his majesty not to stain his illustrious paws with the blood of so insignificant an animal; upon which the Lion very generously let her at liberty. It happened a few days afterwards that the Lion, ranging for prey, fell into the toils of the hunter. The Mouse heard his roarings, knew the voice of her benefactor, and immediately repairing to his assistance, gnawed in pieces the meshes of the net, and by delivering her preferred convinced him that there is no creature so much to be feared as another, but may have it in his power to return a good office.



FABLE XVII.

The Wolf and the Crane.

A WOLF having with too much greediness swallowed a bone, it unfortunately stuck in his throat; and in the violence of his pain he applied to several animals, earnestly entreating them to extract it. None cared to hazard the dangerous experiment, except the Crane; who, persuaded by his solemn promises of a gratuity, ventured to thrust her enormous length of neck down his throat, and having successfully performed the operation, claimed the recompence. See the unreasonableness of some creatures, said the Wolf: have I not suffered thee safely to draw thy neck out of my jaws, and hast thou the conscience to demand a further reward!



FABLE XVIII.

The Countryman and the Snake.

AN honest Countryman observed a Snake lying under a hedge almost frozen to death. He was moved with compassion ; and bringing it home, he laid it near the fire, and gave it some new milk. Thus fed and cherished, the creature presently began to revive : but no sooner had he recovered strength enough to do mischief, than he sprung upon the countryman's wife, bit one of his children, and, in short, threw the whole family into confusion and terror. Ungrateful wretch ! said the man, thou hast sufficiently taught me how ill-judged it is to confer benefits on the worthless and undeserving. So saying, he snatched up an hatchet, and cut the Snake in pieces.



FABLE XIX.

The Dog and the Shadow.

A N hungry Spaniel, having stolen a piece of flesh from a butcher's shop, was carrying it across a river. The water being clear, and the sun shining brightly, he saw his own image in the stream, and fancied it to be another Dog with a more delicious morsel: upon which, unjustly and greedily opening his jaws to snatch at the Shadow, he lost the substance.



FABLE XX.

The Sun and the Wind.

PHŒBUS and Æolus had once a dispute which of them could soonest prevail with a certain traveller to part with his cloak. Æolus began the attack, and assailed him with great violence. But the man wrapping his cloak still closer about him, doubled his efforts to keep it, and went on his way. And now Phœbus darted his warm insinuating rays, which melting the traveller by degrees, at length obliged him to throw aside that cloak, which all the rage of Æolus could not compel him to resign. Learn hence, said Phœbus to the blustering god, that soft and gentle means will often accomplish what force and fury can never effect.



FABLE XXI.

The Wolf and the Mastiff.

A LEAN half-starved Wolf inadvertently strolled in the way of a strong well-fed Mastiff. The Wolf being much too weak to act upon the offensive, thought it most prudent to accost honest Towser in a friendly manner, and among other civilities, very complaisantly congratulated him on his goodly appearance. Why, yes, returned the mastiff, I am indeed in tolerable case; and if you will follow me, you may soon be altogether in as good a plight. The Wolf pricked up his ears at the proposal, and requested to be informed what he must do to earn such plentiful meals. Very little, replied the Mastiff; only drive away beggars, caress my master, and be civil to his family. To these conditions the hungry Wolf had no objection, and very readily consented to follow his new acquaintance wherever he would conduct him. As

they were trotting along, the Wolf observed that the hair was worn in a circle round his friend's neck ; which raised his curiosity to inquire what was the occasion of it. Nothing, answered the Mastiff, or a mere trifle ; perhaps the collar to which my chain is sometimes fastened. Chain ! replied the Wolf, with much surprise ; it should seem then that you are not permitted to rove about where and when you please. Not always, returned Towser, hanging down his head ; but what does that signify ? It signifies so much, rejoined the Wolf, that I am resolved to have no share in your dinners ; half a meal with liberty, is, in my estimation, preferable to a full one without it.



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Fortune and the School-Boy.

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pass by, saw him in this dangerous situation, and kindly gave him a tap on the shoulder : My dear child, said she, if you had fallen into this well, I should have borne the blame ; though in fact, the accident would have been wholly owing to your own carelessness.

Misfortune, said a celebrated cardinal, is but another word for imprudence. The maxim is by no means absolutely true : certain, however, it is, that mankind suffer more evils from their own imprudence, than from events which it is not in their power to control.



FABLE XXIII.

The Frog and the Ox.

A FROG being wonderfully struck with the size and majesty of an Ox that was grazing in the marshes, could not forbear endeavouring to

expand herself to the same portly magnitude. After puffing and swelling for some time, “What think you, sister,” said she, “will this do?” Far from it. “Will this?” by no means. “But this surely will?” Nothing like it. In short, after many ridiculous efforts to the same fruitless purpose, the simple Frog burst her skin, and miserably expired upon the spot.



FABLE XXIV.

The Lion and other Beasts hunting in Partnership.

THE Bull and several other beasts, were ambitious of the honour of hunting with the Lion. His savage majesty graciously condescended to their desire ; and it was agreed, that they should all have an equal share in whatever might be taken. They scour the forest, are unanimous in the pursuit ; and, after a very fine chase, pull down a noble Stag. It was divided with great dexterity by the

Bull, into four equal parts ; but just as he was going to secure his share—Hold, says the Lion, let no one presume to serve himself, till he hath heard our just and reasonable claims. I seize upon the first quarter by virtue of my prerogative ; the second, I think, is due to my superior conduct and courage ; I cannot forego the third on account of the necessities of my den ; and if any one is inclined to dispute my right to the fourth, let him speak. Awed by the majesty of his frown, and the terror of his paws, they silently withdrew, resolving never to hunt again but with their equals.



FABLE XXV.

The Ant and the Fly.

AN Ant and a Fly had once a ridiculous contest about precedence, and were arguing which of the two was the more honourable : such disputes most frequently happen amongst the lowest and

most worthless creatures. The Fly expressed great resentment, that such a poor, crawling insect, should presume to lie basking in the same sunshine, with one so much her superior ! Thou hast not surely the insolence, said she, to imagine thyself of an equal rank with me. I am none of your mechanic creatures who live by their industry ; but enjoy in plenty, and without labour, every thing that is truly delicious. I place myself uncontrolled upon the heads of kings ; I kiss with freedom the lips of beauties ; and feast upon the choicest sacrifices that are offered to the gods. To eat with the gods, replied the Ant, and to enjoy the favours of the fair and the powerful, would be great honour indeed to one who was an invited or a welcome guest ; but an impertinent intruder, who is driven out with aversion and contempt wherever he appears, has not much cause methinks to boast of his privileges. And as to the honour of not labouring for your subsistence ; here too your boast is only your disgrace ; for hence it is, that one half of the year you are destitute even of the common necessities of life ; whilst I, at the same time, retiring to the hoarded granaries which my honest industry has filled, enjoy every satisfaction, independent of the favour either of beauties or of kings.



FABLE XXVI.

The Bear and the two Friends.

TWO Friends, setting out together upon a journey which led through a dangerous forest, mutually promised to assist each other, if they should happen to be assaulted. They had not proceeded far, before they perceived a Bear making towards them with great rage. There were no hopes in flight : but one of them, being very active, sprung up into a tree ; upon which the other, throwing himself flat on the ground, held his breath, and pretended to be dead ; remembering to have heard it asserted, that this creature will not prey upon a dead carcase. The Bear came up, and after smelling to him for some time, left him, and went on. When he was fairly out of sight and hearing, the hero from the tree calls out—Well, my friend, what said the Bear ? He seemed to whisper you very

closely. He did so, replied the other, and gave me this good piece of advice ; never to associate with a wretch, who in the hour of danger will desert his friend.



FABLE XXVII.

The Bull and the Gnat.

A CONCEITED Gnat, fully persuaded of his own importance, having placed himself on the horn of a Bull, expressed great uneasiness lest his weight should be incommodious : and with much ceremony begged the Bull's pardon for the liberty he had taken ; assuring him that he would immediately remove, if he pressed too hard upon him. Give yourself no uneasiness on that account, replied the Bull, I beseech you : for as I never perceived when you sat down, I shall probably not miss you whenever you think fit to rise up.



FABLE XXVIII.

The Wasps and the Bees.

PRETENDERS of every kind are best detected by appealing to their works.

Some honey-combs being claimed by a swarm of Wasps, the right owners protested against their demand, and the cause was referred to a Hornet. Witnesses being examined, they deposed that certain winged creatures, who had a loud hum, of a yellowish colour, and somewhat like Bees, were observed a considerable time hovering about the place where this nest was found. But this did not sufficiently decide the question; for these characteristics, the Hornet observed, agreed no less with the Bees than with the Wasps. At length a sensible old Bee offered to put the matter upon this decisive issue: Let a place be appointed by the court, said he, for the plaintiffs and defendants

to work in : it will then soon appear which of us are capable of forming such regular cells, and afterwards of filling them with so delicious a fluid. The Wasps, refusing to agree to this proposal, sufficiently convinced the judge on which side the right lay: and he decreed the honey-combs accordingly.

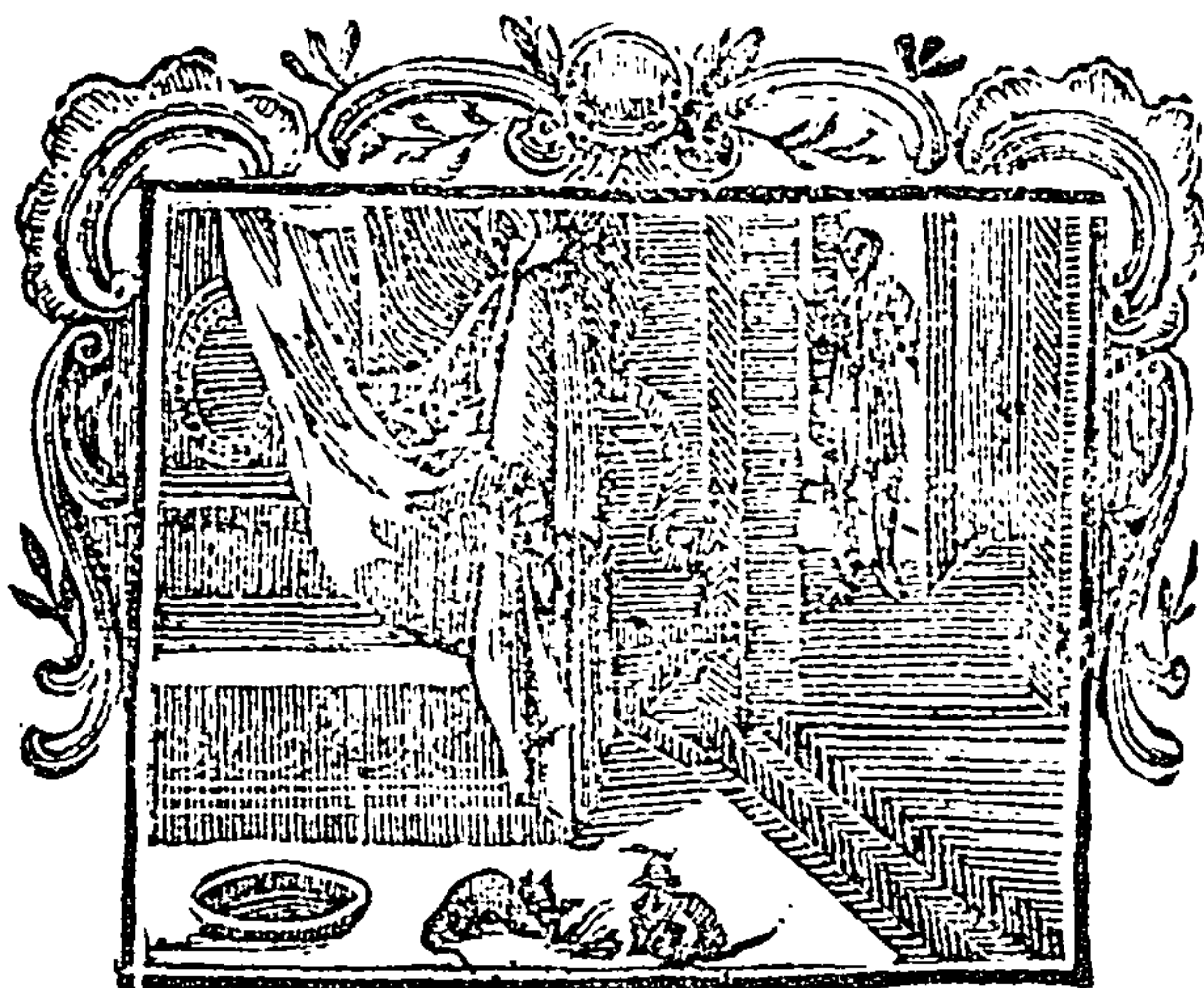


FABLE XXIX.

The Old Man and Death.

A FEEBLE old Man, quite spent with carrying a burden of sticks, which, with much labour, he had gathered in a neighbouring wood, called upon Death to release him from the fatigues he endured. Death hearing the invocation, was immediately at his elbow, and asked him what he wanted. Frighted and trembling at the unexpected appearance : O good sir ! said he, my burden

had like to have slipped from me, and being unable to recover it myself, I only implored your assistance to replace it on my shoulders.

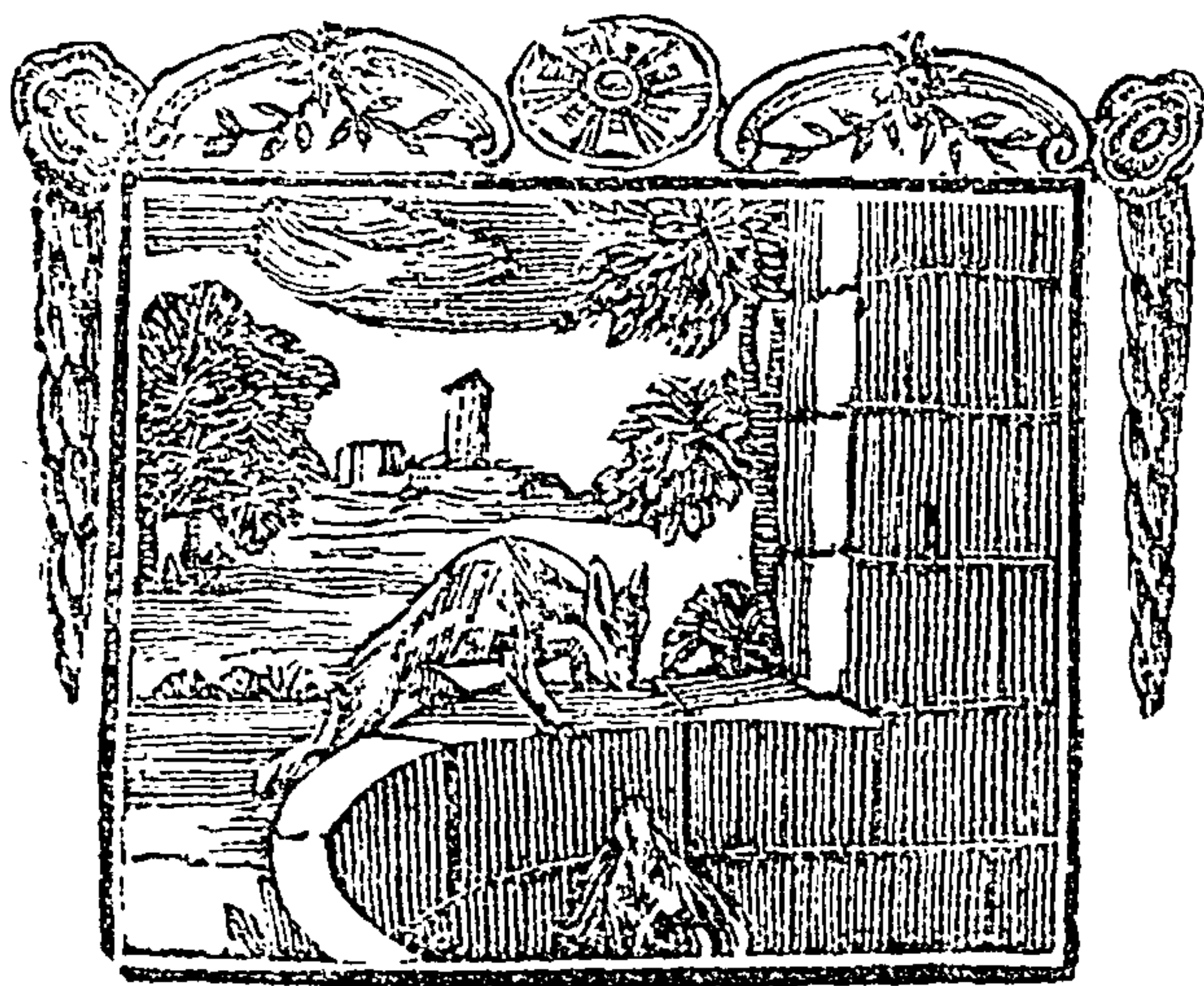


FABLE XXX.

The Court and Country-Mouse.

A CONTENTED Country-Mouse had once the honour to receive a visit from an old acquaintance belonging to the court. The Country Mouse, extremely glad to see her guest, very hospitably set before her the best cheese and bacon which her cottage afforded; and as to their beverage, it was the purest water from the spring. The repast was homely indeed, but the welcome hearty: they sat and chatted away the evening together very agreeably, and then retired in peace and quietness each to her little cell. The next morning, when the guest was to take her leave, she kindly pressed her country

friend to accompany her ; setting forth in very pompous terms, the great elegance and plenty in which she lived at court. The Country-Mouse was easily prevailed upon, and they set out together. It was late in the evening when they arrived at the palace ; however, in one of the rooms, they found the remains of a sumptuous entertainment. There were creams, and jellies, and sweetmeats ; and every thing, in short, of the most delicate kind : the cheese was Parmesan, and they whetted their whiskers in exquisite champaign. But before they had half finished their repast, they were alarmed with the barking and scratching of a lap-dog ; then the mewling of a cat frightened them almost to death ; by and by, a whole train of servants burst into the room, and every thing was swept away in an instant. Ah ! my dear friend, said the Country-Mouse, as soon as she had recovered courage enough to speak, if your fine living is thus interrupted with fears and dangers, let me return to my plain food, and my peaceful cottage ; for what is elegance without ease : or plenty with an aching heart ?

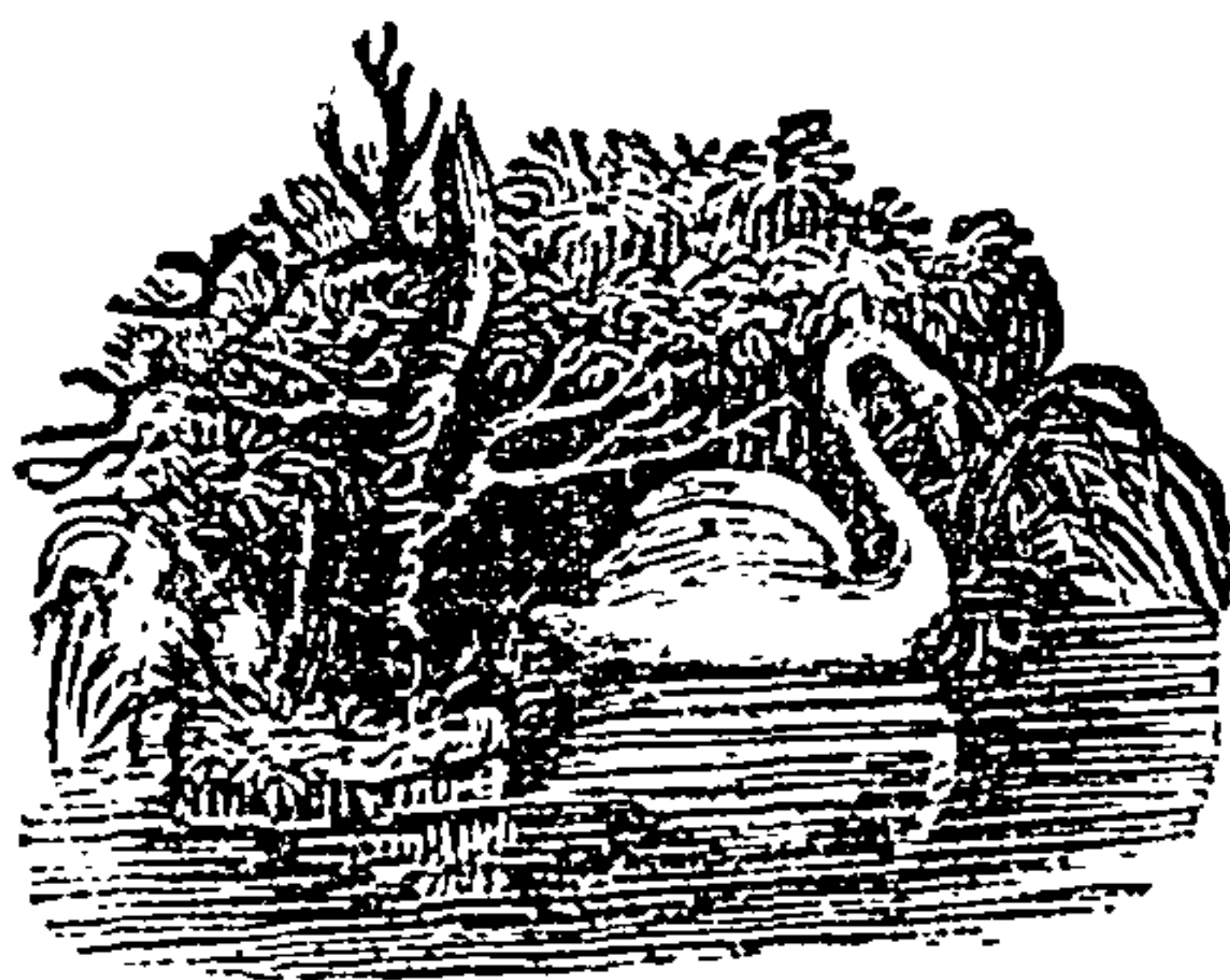


FABLE XXXI.

The Fox and the Goat.

A FOX and a Goat travelling together, in a very sultry day, found themselves exceedingly thirsty; when looking round the country in order to discover a place where they might probably meet with water, they at length descried a clear spring at the bottom of a well. They both eagerly descended, and having sufficiently allayed their thirst, began to consider how they should get out. Many expedients for that purpose were mutually proposed, and rejected. At last the crafty Fox cried out with great joy, I have a thought just struck into my mind, which I am confident will extricate us out of our difficulty: do you, said he to the Goat, only rear yourself up upon your hinder legs, and rest your fore feet against the side of the well. In

this posture, I will climb up to your head, from whence I shall be able, with a spring, to reach the top : and when I am once there, you are sensible it will be very easy for me to pull you out by the horns. The simple Goat liked the proposal well ; and immediately placed himself as directed : by means of which the Fox, without much difficulty, gained the top. And now, said the Goat, give me the assistance you promised. Thou old fool, replied the Fox, hadst thou but half as much brains as beard, thou wouldst never have believed, that I would hazard my own life to save thine. However, I will leave with thee a piece of advice, which may be of service to thee hereafter, if thou shouldst have the good fortune to make thy escape : “ Never venture into a well again, before thou hast well considered how to get out of it.”





FABLE XXII.

The Farmer, the Cranes, and the Stork.

A STORK was unfortunately drawn into company with some Cranes, who were just setting out on a party of pleasure, as they called it, which in truth was to rob the fish-ponds of a neighbouring Farmer. Our simple Stork agreed to make one; and it so happened, that they were all taken in the fact. The Cranes having been old offenders, had very little to say for themselves, and were presently dispatched; but the Stork pleaded hard for his life. He urged that it was his first fault, that he was not naturally addicted to stealing fish, that he was famous for piety to his parents, and, in short, for many other virtues. Your piety and virtue, said the Farmer, may, for aught I know, be exemplary; but your being in company with thieves renders it very suspicious; and you must therefore submit with patience to share the same punishment with your companions.



FABLE XXXIII.

The Oak and the Willow.

A CONCEITED Willow had once the vanity to challenge his mighty neighbour the Oak, to a trial of strength. It was to be determined by the next storm, and *Æolus* was addressed by both parties, to exert his most powerful efforts. This was no sooner asked than granted; and a violent hurricane arose: when the pliant Willow, bending from the blast, or shrinking under it, evaded all its force; while the generous Oak, disdaining to give way, opposed its fury, and was torn up by the roots. Immediately the Willow began to exult, and to claim the victory; when thus the fallen Oak interrupted his exultation: Callest thou this a trial of strength? Poor wretch! not to thy strength, but weakness; not to thy boldly facing danger, but meanly skulking from it, thou owest thy present safety. I am an Oak, though fallen; thou still a

Willow, though unhurt : but who, except so mean a wretch as thyself, would prefer an ignominious life, preserved by craft or cowardice, to the glory of meeting death in an honourable cause.



FABLE XXXIV.

The Boy and the Filberts.

A CERTAIN Boy, as Epictetus tells the fable, put his hand into a pitcher, where great plenty of figs and filberts were deposited ; he grasped as many as his fist could possibly hold, but when he endeavoured to pull it out, the narrowness of the neck prevented him. Unwilling to lose any of them, but unable to draw out his hand, he burst into tears, and bitterly bemoaned his hard fortune. An honest fellow who stood by, gave him this wise and seasonable advice :—Grasp only half the quantity, my Boy, and you will easily succeed.



FABLE XXXV.

The Satyr and the Traveller.

A POOR Man travelling in the depth of winter, through a dreary forest, no inn to receive him, no human creature to befriend or comfort him, was in danger of being starved to death. At last, however, he came to the cave of a Satyr, where he intreated leave to rest a while, and shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather. The Satyr very civilly complied with his request. The Man had no sooner entered, than he began to blow his fingers. His host, surprised at the novelty of the action, was curious to know the meaning of it. I do it, said the Traveller, to warm my frozen joints, which are benumbed with cold. Presently afterwards, the Satyr having prepared a mess of hot gruel to refresh his guest, the Man found it necessary to blow his pottage too. What, inquired the Satyr, is not your gruel hot enough?

Yes, replied the Traveller, too hot ; and I blow it to make it cooler. Do you so ? quoth the Satyr, then get out of my cave as fast as you can ; for I desire to have no communication with a creature that blows hot and cold with the same breath.

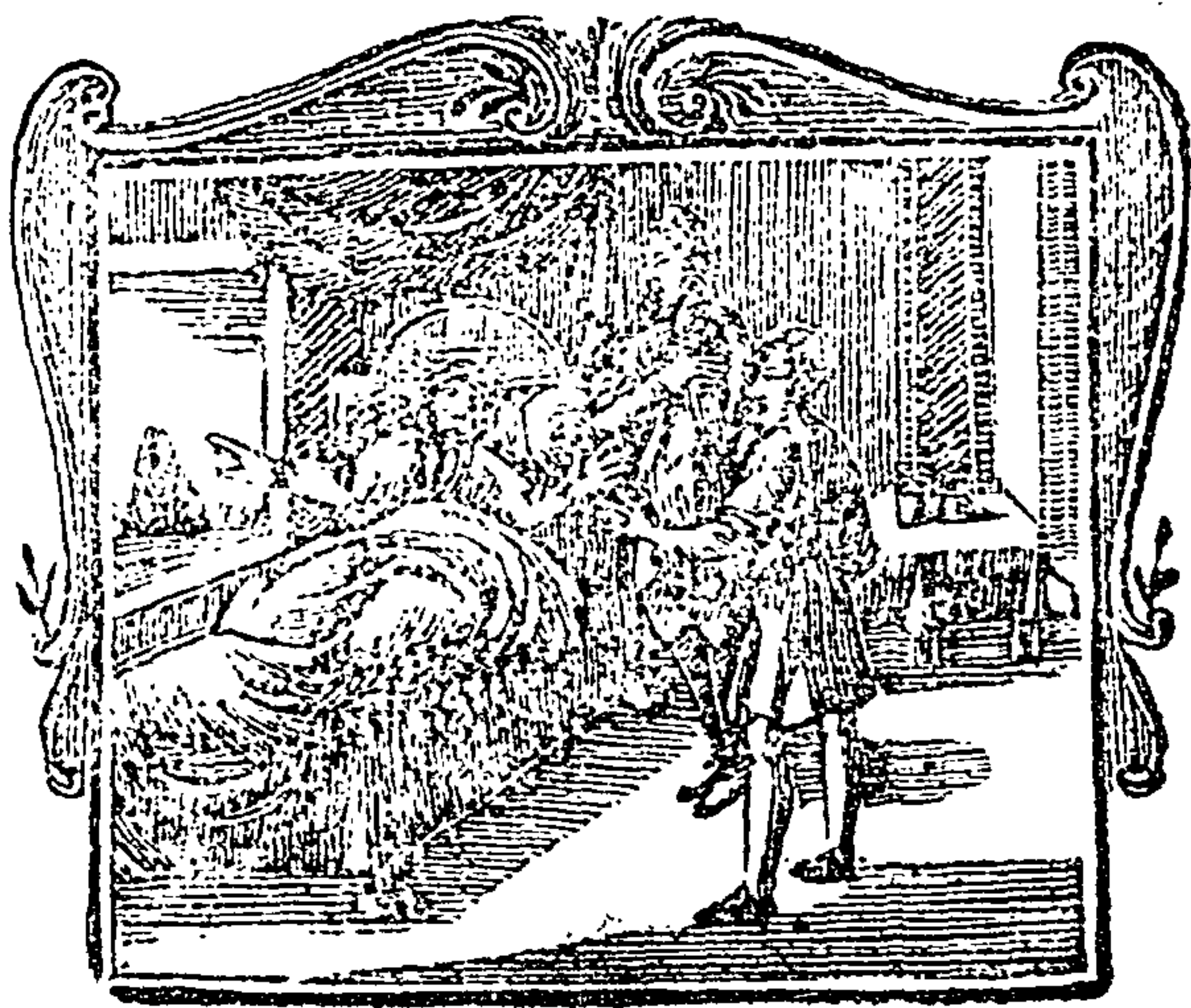


FABLE XXXVI.

The Horse and the Stag.

BEFORE the use of Horses was known in the world, one of those noble animals, having been insulted by a Stag, and finding himself unequal to his adversary, applied to a man for assistance. The request was easily granted, and the man putting a bridle in his mouth, and mounting upon his back, soon came up with the Stag, and laid him dead at his enemy's feet. The Horse having thus gratified his revenge, thanked his auxiliary : And now will I

return in triumph, said he, and reign the undisputed lord of the forest. By no means, replied the man ; I shall have occasion for your services, and you must go home with me. So saying, he led him to his hovel, where the unhappy Steed spent the remainder of his days in a laborious servitude ; sensible too late, that how pleasing soever revenge may appear, it always costs more to a generous mind than the purchase is worth.



FABLE XXXVII.

The Farmer and his Sons.

A WEALTHY old Farmer, who had for some time declined in his health, perceiving that he had not many days to live, called his sons together to his bedside. My dear children, said the dying man, I leave it with you as my last injunction, not to part with the farm which has been in our

family these hundred years : for, to disclose to you a secret which I received from my father, and which I now think proper to communicate to you, there is a treasure hid somewhere in the grounds ; though I never could discover the particular spot where it lies concealed. However, as soon as the harvest is got in, spare no pains in the search, and I am well assured you will not lose your labour. The wise old man was no sooner laid in his grave, and the time he mentioned arrived, than his sons went to work, and with great vigour and alacrity turned up again and again every foot of ground belonging to their farm ; the consequence of which was, although they did not find the object of their pursuit, that their lands yielded a far more plentiful crop than those of their neighbours. At the end of the year, when they were settling their accounts, and computing their extraordinary profits, I would venture a wager, said one of the brothers, more acute than the rest, that this was the concealed wealth my father meant. I am sure at least, we have found by experience, that “ Industry is itself a treasure.”



FABLE XXXVIII.

The Lion and the Gnat.

A VAUNT! thou paltry, contemptible insect! said a proud Lion one day to a Gnat that was frisking about in the air near his den. The Gnat, enraged at this unprovoked insult, vowed revenge, and immediately darted into the Lion's ear. After having sufficiently teased him in that quarter, she quitted her station, and retired under his belly; and from thence made her last and most formidable attack in his nostrils, where stinging him almost to madness, the Lion at length fell down, utterly spent with rage, vexation, and pain. The Gnat having thus abundantly gratified her resentment, flew off in great exultation: but in the heedless transports of her success, not sufficiently attending to her own security; she found herself unexpected-

ly entangled in the web of a spider ; who, rushing out instantly upon her, put an end to her triumph and her life.

This fable instructs us, never to suffer success so far to transport us, as to throw us off our guard against a reverse of fortune.



FABLE XXXIX.

The Miser and his Treasure.

A MISER having scraped together a considerable sum of money, by denying himself the common conveniences of life, was much embarrassed where to lodge it most securely. After many perplexing debates with himself, he at length fixed upon a corner in a retired field, where he deposited his Treasure, and with it his heart, in a hole, which he dug for that purpose. His mind was now for a moment at ease ; but he had not pro-

ceeded many paces in his way home, when all his anxiety returned; and he could not forbear going back to see that every thing was safe. This he repeated again and again! till he was at last observed by a labourer who was mending a hedge in an adjacent meadow. The fellow concluding that something extraordinary must be the occasion of the frequent visits marked the spot; and coming in the night in order to examine it, he discovered the prize, and bore it off unmolested. Early the next morning, the Miser again renewed his visit; when finding his treasure gone, he broke out into the most bitter exclamations. A Traveller, who happened to be passing by at the same time, was moved by his complaints to enquire into the cause of them. Alas! replied the Miser, I have sustained the most cruel and irreparable loss! some villain has robbed me of a sum of money, which I buried under this stone no longer ago than yesterday. Buried! returned the Traveller with surprize; a very extraordinary method truly of disposing of your riches! Why did you not rather keep them in your house, that they might be ready for your daily occasions? Daily occasions! resumed the Miser, with an air of much indignation; do you imagine I so little know the value of money, as to suffer it to be run away with by occasions? on the contrary, I had prudently resolved not to touch a single shilling of it. If that was your wise resolution, answered the Traveller, I see no sort of reason for your being thus afflicted; it is but putting this stone in the place of your Treasure, and it will answer all your purposes full as well.



FABLE XL.

Minerva's Olive.

THE gods, say the heathen mythologists, have each of them their favourite tree. Jupiter preferred the oak, Venus the myrtle, and Phœbus the laurel; Cybele the pine, and Hercules the poplar. Minerva, surprized that they should choose barren trees, asked Jupiter the reason.—It is, said he, to prevent any suspicion that we confer the honour we do them, from an interested motive. Let folly suspect what it pleases, returned Minerva; I shall not scruple to acknowledge, that I make choice of the Olive for the usefulness of its fruits. O daughter, replied the father of the gods, it is with justice that men esteem thee wise; for nothing is truly valuable that is not useful.



FABLE XLI.

The Mimic and the Countryman.

MEN often judge wrong from some foolish prejudice ; and whilst they persist in the defence of their mistakes, are sometimes brought to shame by incontestible evidence.

A certain wealthy patrician, intending to treat the Roman people with some theatrical entertainments, published a reward to any one who could furnish out a new or uncommon diversion. Excited by emulation, the artists assembled from all parts ; among whom, a Mimic, well known for his arch wit, gave out, that he had a kind of entertainment that had never yet been produced upon any stage.

This report being spread about, brought the whole city together. The theatre could hardly contain the number of spectators. And when the

artist appeared alone upon the stage, without any apparatus, without any prompter or assistant, curiosity and suspense kept the spectators in a profound silence.

On a sudden the performer thrust down his head into his bosom, and mimicked the squeaking of a young pig so naturally, that the audience insisted upon it, he had one under his cloak, and ordered him to be searched. Which being done, and nothing appearing, they loaded the man with encomiums, and honoured him with the most extravagant applause.

A country fellow observing what past——
“Faith,” says he, “I can do this better than he:” and immediately gave out that he would perform the same much better the next day. Accordingly, greater crowds assembled: prepossessed, however, in favour of the first artist, they sit prepared to laugh at the Clown, rather than to judge fairly of his performance.

They both came out upon the stage. The Mimic grunts away first, is received with vast applause, and the loudest acclamations. Then the Countryman, pretending that he concealed a little pig under his clothes (which, in fact, he did) pinched the ear of the animal, till he made him squeak. The people exclaimed aloud that the first performer had imitated the pig much more naturally; and would have hissed the Countryman off the stage, but he produced the real pig from his bosom, and convincing them by a visible proof of their ridiculous error; See, gentlemen, says he, What pretty sort of Judges you are!



FABLE XLII.

The Dog and the Crocodile.

WE can never be too carefully guarded against a connection with persons of an ill character.

As a Dog was coursing the banks of the Nile, he grew thirsty ; but, fearing to be seized by the monsters of that river, he would not stop to satiate his drought, but lapped as he ran. A Crocodile raising his head above the surface of the water, asked him, Why he was in such a hurry ? he had often, he said, wished for his acquaintance, and should be glad to embrace the present opportunity. You do me great honour, returned the Dog, but it is to avoid such companions as you that I am in so much haste.



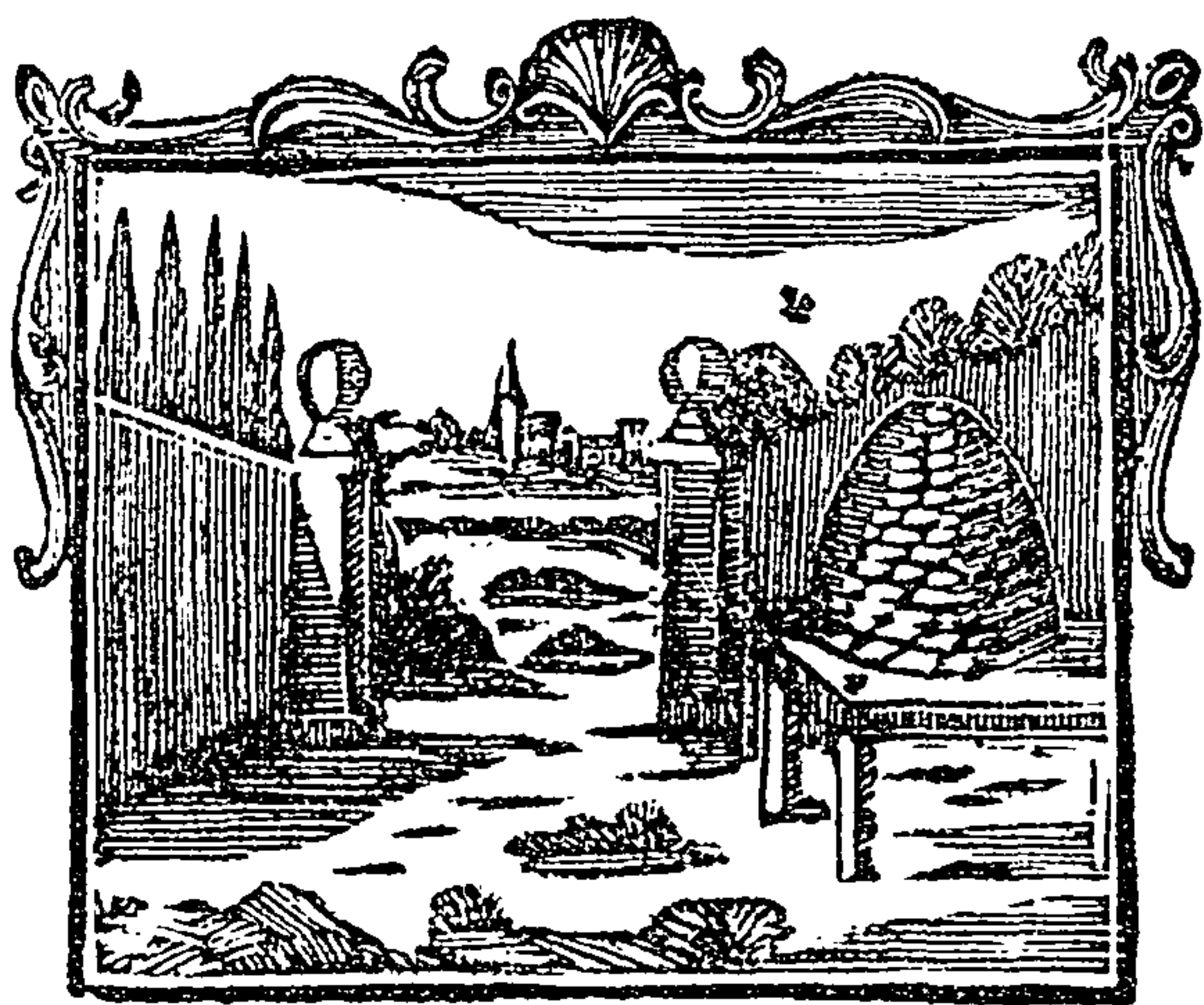
FABLE XLIII.

The „Wolf in Disguise.

DESIGNING hypocrites frequently lay themselves open to discovery, by over-acting their parts.

A Wolf, who by frequent visits to a flock of sheep in his neighbourhood, began to be extremely well known to them, thought it expedient, for the more successfully carrying on his depredations, to appear in a new character. To this end he disguised himself in a shepherd's habit ; and resting his fore-feet upon a stick, which served him by way of crook, he softly made his approaches toward the fold. It happened that the shepherd and his dog were both of them extended on the grass, fast asleep ; so that he would certainly have succeeded in his project, if he had not imprudently attempted to imitate the shepherd's voice. The horrid noise awakened them

both : When the Wolf, encumbered with his disguise, and finding it impossible either to resist or to flee, yielded up his life an easy prey to the shepherd's dog.



FABLE XLIV.

The Bee and the Spider.

THE Bee and the Spider once entered into a warm debate which was the better artist. The Spider urged her skill in the mathematics, and asserted, that no one was half so well acquainted as herself with the construction of lines, angles, squares, and circles : that the web she daily wove was a specimen of art inimitable by any other creature in the universe : and besides, that her works were derived from herself alone, the product of her own bowels : whereas the boasted honey of the Bee was stolen from every herb and

flower of the field ; nay, that she had obligations even to the meanest weeds. To this the Bee replied, that she was in hopes the art of extracting honey from the meanest weeds would at least have been allowed her as an excellence ; and that as to her stealing sweets from the herbs and flowers of the field, her skill was there so conspicuous, that no flower ever suffered the least dimunition of its fragrance from so delicate an operation. Then, as to the Spider's vaunted knowledge in the construction of lines and angles, she believed she might safely rest the merits of her cause on the regularity alone of her combs ; but since she could add to this, the sweetness and excellence of her honey, and the various purposes to which her wax was employed, she had nothing to fear from the comparison of her skill with that of the weaver of a flimsy cobweb : for the value of every art, she observed, is chiefly to be estimated by its use.





FABLE XLV.

The Afs and his Master.

A DILIGENT Afs, daily loaded beyond his strength by a severe Master whom he had long served, and who kept him at very short commons, happened one day in his old age, to be oppressed with a more than ordinary burthen of earthen-ware. His strength being much impaired, and the road deep and uneven, he unfortunately made a trip, and unable to recover himself, fell down and broke all the vessels to pieces. His Master, transported with rage, began to beat him most unmercifully. Against whom the poor Afs, lifting up his head as he lay on the ground, thus strongly remonstrated: Unfeeling wretch! to thy own avaricious cruelty, in first pinching me of food, and then loading me beyond my strength, thou owest the misfortune which thou so unjustly imputeest to me.



FABLE XLVI.

The Cock and the Fox.

AN experienced old Cock was settling himself to roost upon a high bough, when a Fox appeared under the tree. I am come, said the artful hypocrite, to acquaint you in the name of all my brethren, that a general peace is concluded between your whole family and ours. Descend immediately, I beseech you, that we may mutually embrace upon so joyful and unexpected an event. My good friend, replied the Cock, nothing could be more agreeable to me than this news: and to hear it from you increases my satisfaction. But I perceive two hounds at a distance coming this way, who are probably dispatched as couriers with the treaty: as they run very swiftly, and will certainly be here in a few minutes, I will wait their arrival, that we may all four embrace together. Reynard well knew if that was the case, it was no time for

him to remain there any longer : pretending therefore to be in great haste ; Adieu, said he, for the present ; we will reserve our rejoicings to another opportunity : upon which he darted into the woods with all imaginable expedition. Old Chanticleer no sooner saw him depart, than he crowed abundantly in the triumph of his artifice : for by a harmless stratagem to disappoint the malevolent intentions of those who are endeavouring to deceive us to our ruin, is not only innocent but laudable.



FABLE XLVII.

The Eagle and the Crow.

TO mistake our own talents; or over-rate our abilities, is always ridiculous, and sometimes dangerous.

An Eagle, from the top of a high mountain,

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making a stoop at a lamb, pounced it, and bore it away to her young. A Crow, who had built her nest in a cedar near the foot of the rock, observing what passed, was ambitious of performing the same exploit; and darting from her nest, fixed her talons in the fleece of another lamb. But neither able to move her prey, nor to disentangle her feet, she was taken by the shepherd, and carried away for his children to play with; who eagerly enquiring what bird it was,—An hour ago, said he, she fancied herself an Eagle; however, I suppose she is by this time convinced that she is but a Crow.



FABLE XLVIII.

The Farmer and the Stag.

A STAG, who had left at some distance a pack of hounds, came up to a Farmer, and desired he would suffer him to hide himself in a little copse which joined to his house. The Farmer, on

condition that he would forbear to enter a field of wheat, which lay before him, and was now ready for the sickle, immediately gave him leave, and promised not to betray him. The 'squire with his train instantly appeared, and enquiring whether he had not seen the Stag? No, said the Farmer, he has not passed this way, I assure you: but, in order to curry favour at the same time with his worship, he pointed sily with his finger to the place where the poor beast lay concealed. This, however, the sportsman, intent on his game, did not observe, but passed on with his dogs across the very field. As soon as the Stag perceived they were gone, he prepared to steal off, without speaking a word. Methinks, cried the Farmer, you might thank me, at least, for the refuge I have afforded you: Yes, said the Stag, and had your hands been as honest as your tongue, I certainly should; but all the return that a double-dealer has to expect, is a just indignation and contempt.



FABLE XLIX.

The Lion, the Tiger, and the Fox.

A LION and a Tiger jointly seized on a young fawn, which they immediately killed. This they had no sooner performed, than they fell a fighting, in order to decide whose property it should be. The battle was so bloody, and so obstinate, that they were both compelled, through weariness and loss of blood, to desist ; and lay down by mutual consent, totally disabled. At this instant, a Fox unluckily came by ; who, perceiving their situation, made bold to seize the contested prey, and bore it off unmolested. As soon as the Lion could recover breath—How foolish, said he, has been our conduct ! Instead of being contented as we ought, with our respective shares ; our senseless rage has rendered us unable to prevent this rascally Fox from defrauding us of the whole.



FABLE I.

The Lion and the Afs.

A CONCEITED Afs had once the impertinence to bray forth some contemptuous speeches against the Lion. The suddenness of the insult at first raised some emotions of wrath in his breast ; but turning his head, and perceiving from whence it came, they immediately subsided ; and he very sedately walked on, without deigning to honour the contemptible creature even so much as with an angry word.



FABLE LI.

'The Snake and the Hedge-Hog.

IT is by no means prudent to join interests with such as have it in their power to impose upon us their own conditions.

By the intreaties of a Hedge-hog, half starved with cold, a Snake was once persuaded to receive him to her cell. He was no sooner entered than his prickles began to be very uneasy to his companion : upon which, the Snake desired he would provide himself another lodging, as she found, upon trial, the apartment was not large enough to accommodate both. Nay, said the Hedge-hog, let them that are uneasy in their situation exchange it ; for my own part, I am very well contented where I am : if you are not, you are welcome to remove whenever you think proper.



FABLE LII.

The Trumpeter.

A TRUMPETER in a certain army happened to be taken prisoner. He was ordered immediately to execution, but pleaded in excuse for himself, that it was unjust a person should suffer death; who, far from an intention of mischief, did not even wear an offensive weapon. So much the rather, replied one of the enemy, shalt thou die; since without any design of fighting thyself, thou excitest others to the bloody business: for he that is the abettor of a bad action, is at least equally guilty with him that commits it.



FABLE LIII.

* Vice and Fortune.

FORTUNE and Vice, according to Plutarch, had once a violent contest, which of them had it most in their power to make mankind unhappy. Fortune boasted that she could take from men every external good, and bring upon them every external evil. Be it so, replied Vice; but this is by no means sufficient to make them miserable without my assistance: whereas without yours, I am able to render them completely so; nay, in spite too of all your endeavours to make them happy.

* This Fable is abridged from Plutarch, by Lord Belingbroke, in his Philosophical Tracts.



FABLE LIV.

The Bear and the Bees.

A BEAR happened to be stung by a Bee; and the pain was so acute, that in the madness of revenge he ran into the garden, and overturned the hive. This outrage provoked their anger to a high degree, and brought the fury of the whole swarm upon him. They attacked him with such violence, that his life was in danger; and it was with the utmost difficulty that he made his escape, wounded from head to tail. In this desperate condition, lamenting his misfortunes, and licking his sores, he could not forbear reflecting how much more adviseable it had been to have patiently acquiesced under one injury, than thus by an unprofitable resentment to have provoked a thousand.

FABLES.



BOOK II.



FROM THE MODERNS.



FABLE I.

The Miller, his Son, and their Afs.

A MILLER and his Son were driving their Afs to market, in order to sell him : and that he might get thither fresh, and in good condition, they drove him on gently before them. They had not proceeded far, when they met a company of travellers. Sure, say they, you are mighty careful of your Afs ; methinks, one of you might as well get up and ride, as suffer him to walk on at his ease, while you trudge after on foot. In compliance with this advice, the old Man set his Son upon the beast. And now, they had scarce advanced a quarter of a mile further, before they met another company. You idle young rogue, said one of the party, why don't you get down, and let your poor Father ride ? Upon this, the old Man made his Son dismount, and got up himself. While they were marching in this manner, a third company

began to insult the Father. You hard-hearted unnatural wretch, say they, how can you suffer that poor lad to wade through the dirt, while you, like an alderman, ride at your ease? The good-natured man stood corrected, and immediately took his son up behind him. And now the next man they met exclaimed with more vehemence and indignation than all the rest—Was there ever such a couple of lazy boobies! to overload in so unconscionable a manner, a poor dumb creature, who is far less able to carry them than they are to carry him! The complying old Man would have been half inclined to make the trial, had not experience by this time sufficiently convinced him, that there cannot be a more fruitless attempt, than to endeavour to please all mankind.





FABLE II.

The Sorceress.

NIGHT and silence had now given repose to the whole world, when an old ill-natured Sorceress, in order to exercise her infernal arts, entered into a gloomy wood, that trembled at her approach. The scene of her horrid incantations was within the circumference of a large circle; in the centre of which an altar was raised, where the hallowed vervain blazed in triangular flames, while the mischievous Hag pronounced the dreadful words, which bound all hell in obedience to her charms. She blows a raging pestilence from her lips into the neighbouring folds; the innocent cattle die, to afford a fit sacrifice to the infernal deities. The moon, by powerful spells drawn down from her orb, enters the wood: legions of spirits from Pluto's realms appear before the altar, and demand her pleasure. Tell me, said she, where I shall find what

I have lost, my favourite little Dog. How !——cried they all, enraged—Impertinent Beldame !——must the order of nature be inverted, and the repose of every creature disturbed, for the sake of thy little Dog?



FABLE III.

The Camelcon.

TWO travellers happened on their journey to be engaged in a warm dispute about the colour of the Cameleon. One of them affirmed, it was blue ; that he had seen it with his own eyes, upon the naked branch of a tree, feeding on the air, in a very clear day. The other strongly asserted it was green, and that he had viewed it very closely and minutely on the broad leaf of a fig-tree. Both of them were positive, and the dispute was rising to a quarrel : but a third person luckily coming by, they agreed to refer the question to

his decision. Gentlemen, said the arbitrator, with a smile of great self-satisfaction, you could not have been more lucky in your reference, as I happened to have caught one of them last night : but indeed you are both mistaken, for the creature is totally black. Black ! Impossible ! Nay, quoth the umpire with great assurance, the matter may soon be decided, for I immediately inclosed my Cameleon in a little paper box, and here it is. So saying, he drew it out of his pocket, opened his box, and behold it was as white as snow. The positive disputants looked equally surpris'd, and equally confounded : while the sagacious reptile, assuming the air of a philosopher, thus admonish'd them : Ye children of men, learn diffidence and moderation in your opinions. 'Tis true, you happen, in the present instance, to be all in the right, and have only considered the subject under different circumstances : but pray, for the future, allow others to have eye-sight as well as yourselves ; and be candid enough not to condemn any man for judging of things as they appear to his own view.



FABLE IV.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

A FLOCK of Sheep were feeding in a meadow, while their Dogs were asleep, and their Shepherd at a distance playing on his pipe beneath the shade of a spreading elm. A young inexperienced Lamb observing a half-starved Wolf peeping through the pales of the inclosure, entered into conversation with him. Pray what are you seeking for here? said the Lamb. I am looking, replied the Wolf, for some tender grafs; for nothing you know is more pleasant than to feed in a fresh pasture, and to slake one's thirst at a crystal stream: both which I perceive you enjoy within these pales in their utmost perfection. Happy creature! continued he, how much I envy your lot! who are in full possession of the utmost I desire: for philosophy has long taught me to be satisfied with a little. It seems then, returned the Lamb, those who say you feed

on flesh, accuse you falsely, since a little grass will easily content you. If this be true, let us for the future live like brethren, and feed together. So saying, the simple Lamb imprudently crept through the fence, and became at once a prey to our pretended philosopher, and a sacrifice to his own inexperience and credulity.



FABLE V.

The Fox and the Bramble.

A FOX, closely pursued by a pack of Dogs, took shelter under the covert of a Bramble. He rejoiced in his asylum; and, for a while, was very happy: but soon found, that if he attempted to stir, he was wounded by thorns and prickles on every side. However, making a virtue of necessity, he forbore to complain; and comforted himself with reflecting, that no bliss is perfect; that good and evil are mixed, and flow from the same

fountain. These Briars indeed, said he, will tear my skin a little, yet they keep off the Dogs. For the sake of the good then, let me bear the evil with patience : Each bitter has its sweet ; and these Brambles, though they wound my flesh, preserve my life from danger.



FABLE VI.

The Falcon and the Hen.

DIFFERENT circumstances make the same action right or wrong, a virtue or a vice. Of all the creatures I ever knew, said a Falcon to a Hen, you are certainly the most ungrateful. What instance of ingratitude, replied the Hen, can you justly charge upon me ? The greatest, returned the Falcon ; ingratitude to your highest benefactors, Men. Do they not feed you every day, and shelter you every night ? Nevertheless, when they endeavour to court you to them, you ungratefully forget all

their kindness, and fly from them as from an enemy. Now I, who am wild by nature, and no way obliged to them; yet upon the least of their caresses, I suffer myself to be taken, and go, or come, at their command. All this is very true, replied the Hen, but there may be a sufficient reason both for my fear, and your familiarity. I believe you never saw a single Falcon roasting at the fire; whereas I have seen a hundred Hens trussed for that purpose.



FABLE VII.

The Travellers and the Money Bag.

AS two men were travelling on the road, one of them espied a Bag of Money lying on the ground, and picking it up, I am in luck this morning, said he, I have found a Bag of Money. Yes, returned the other; though, methinks you should

not say *I*, but *We* have found it : for when two friends are travelling together, they ought equally to share in any accidental good fortune that may happen to attend them. No, rejoined the former, it was *I* that found it, and *I* must insist upon keeping it. He had no sooner spoken the words, than they were alarmed with a hue and cry after a thief, who had that morning taken a purse upon the road. Lord, said the finder, this is extremely unfortunate ; we shall certainly be seized. Good Sir, replied the other, be pleased not to say *We*, but *I* : as you would not allow me a share in the prize, you have no right to make me a partner in the punishment.



FABLE VIII.

The discontented Afs.

IN the depth of winter a poor Afs prayed heartily for the spring, that he might exchange a cold lodging, and a heartless truss of straw, for a little

warm weather and a mouthful of fresh grafs. In a short time, according to his wish, the warm weather and the fresh grafs came on ; but brought with them so much toil and business, that he was soon as weary of the spring as before of the winter ; and he now became impatient for the approach of summer. Summer arrives : but the heat, the harvest work, and other drudgeries and inconveniences of the season, set him as far from happiness as before ; which he now flattered himself would be found in the plenty of autumn. But here too he is disappointed ; for what with the carrying of apples, roots, fuel for the winter, and other provisions, he was in autumn more fatigued than ever. Having thus trod round the circle of the year, in a course of restless labour, uneasiness, and disappointment, and found no season, nor station of life, without its business and its trouble, he was forced at last to acquiesce in the comfortless season of winter, where his complaint began : convinced that in this world every situation has its inconvenience.





FABLE IX.

The two Springs.

TWO Springs, which issued from the same mountain, began their course together: one of them took her way in a silent and gentle stream, while the other rushed along with a sounding and rapid current. Sister, said the latter, at the rate you move, you will probably be dried up before you advance much farther: whereas, for myself, I will venture a wager, that within two or three hundred furlongs I shall become navigable, and after distributing commerce and wealth wherever I flow, I shall majestically proceed to pay my tribute to the ocean: so farewell, dear sister, and patiently submit to your fate. Her sister made no reply; but calmly descending to the meadows below, increased her stream by numberless little rills, which she collected in her progress, till at length she was enabled to rise into a considerable river:

while the proud Stream, who had the vanity to depend solely upon her own sufficiency, continued a shallow brook, and was glad at last to be helped forward, by throwing herself into the arms of her despised sister.



FABLE X.

The Rose and the Butterfly.

A FINE powdered Butterfly fell in love with a beautiful Rose, who expanded her charms in a neighbouring parterre. Matters were soon adjusted between them, and they mutually vowed eternal fidelity. The Butterfly, perfectly satisfied with the success of his amour, took a tender leave of his mistress, and did not return again till noon. What! said the Rose, when she saw him approaching, is the ardent passion you vowed, so soon extinguished? It is an age since you paid me a visit. But no wonder: for I observed you courting by

turns every flower in the garden. You little coquette, replied the Butterfly, it well becomes You truly, to reproach me with my gallantries ; when in fact I only copy the example which you yourself have set me. For, not to mention the satisfaction with which you admitted the kisses of the fragrant Zephyr, did I not see you displaying your charms to the Bee, the Fly, the Wasp, and, in short, encouraging and receiving the addresses of every buzzing insect that fluttered within your view ? If you will be a coquette, you must expect to find me inconstant.



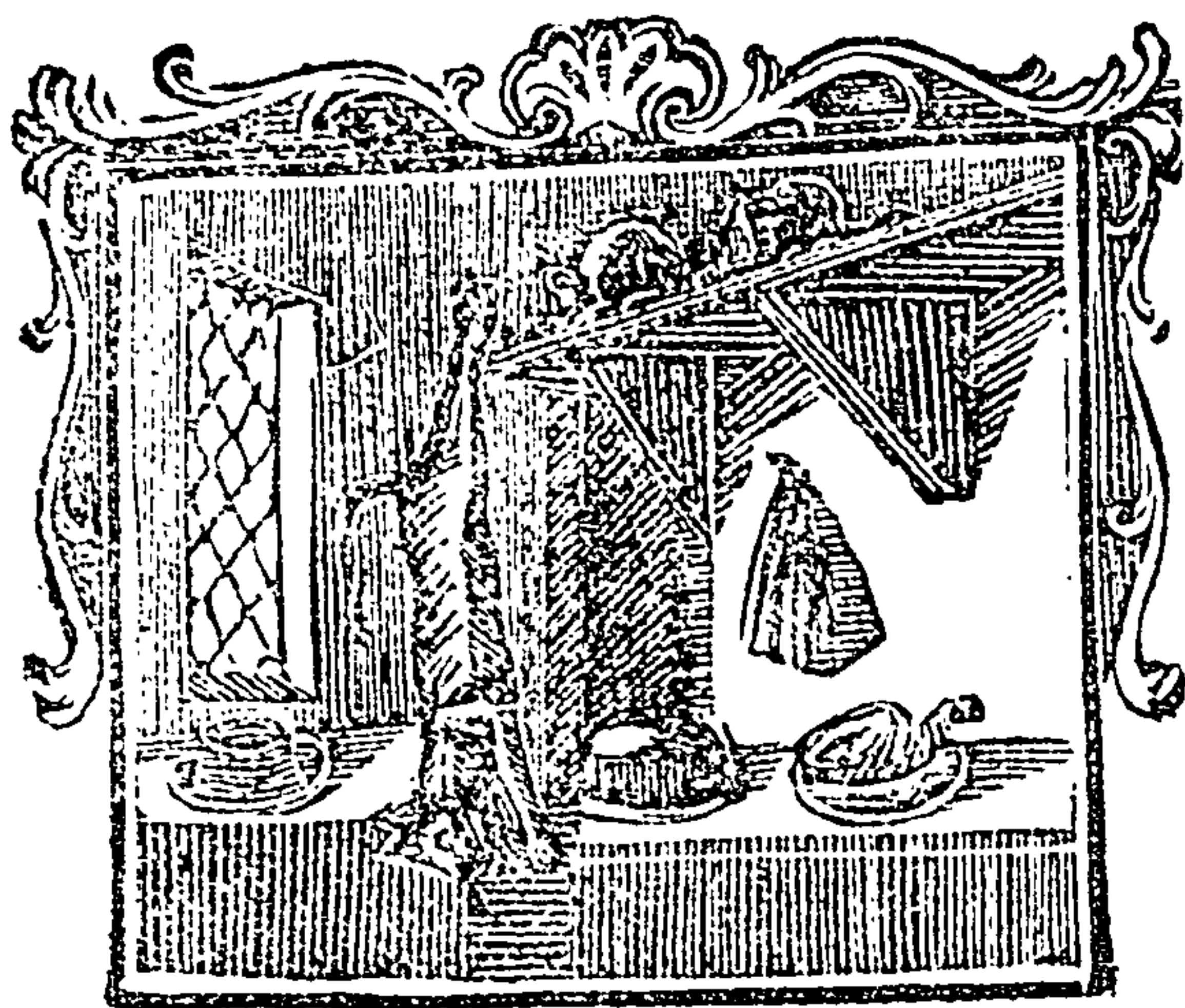
FABLE XI.

The Tortoise and the two Ducks.

VANITY and idle curiosity are qualities which generally prove destructive to those who suffer themselves to be governed by them.

A Tortoise, weary of passing her days in the same obscure corner, conceived a wonderful inclination to visit foreign countries. Two Ducks, whom the simple Tortoise acquainted with her intention, undertook to oblige her, upon the occasion. Accordingly they told her, that if she would fasten her mouth to the middle of a pole, they would take the two ends, and transport her whithersoever she chose to be conveyed. The Tortoise approved of the expedient; and every thing being prepared, the Ducks began their flight with her. They had not travelled far in the air, when they were met by a Crow, who enquiring what they were bearing along, they replied, the queen of the Tortoises. The Tortoise, vain of the new and unmerited appellation, was going to confirm the title, when opening her mouth for that purpose, she let go her hold, and was dashed to pieces by her fall.





FABLE XII.

The Cat and the old Rat.

A CERTAIN Cat had made such unmerciful havock among the vermin of her neighbourhood, that not a single Rat or Mouse dared venture to appear abroad. Puss was soon convinced, that if affairs remained in their present situation, she must be totally unsupplied with provision. After mature deliberation, therefore, she resolved to have recourse to stratagem. For this purpose, she suspended herself from a hook with her head downwards, pretending to be dead. The Rats and Mice observing her, as they peeped from their holes, in this dangling attitude, concluded she was hanged for some misdemeanour; and with great joy immediately sallied forth in quest of their prey. Puss, as soon as a sufficient number were collected together, quitting her hold, dropped into the midst of them; and very few had the fortune to make good

their retreat. This artifice having succeeded so well, she was encouraged to try the event of a second. Accordingly she whitened her coat all over, by rolling herself in a heap of flour, and in this disguise lay concealed in the bottom of a meal-tub. This stratagem was executed in general with the same effect as the former. But an old experienced Rat, altogether as cunning as his adversary, was not so easily ensnared. I don't much like, said he, that white heap yonder; something whispers me, there is mischief concealed under it. 'Tis true, it may be meal; but it may likewise be something that I shall not relish quite so well. There can be no harm, at least, in keeping at a proper distance: for caution, I am sure, is the parent of security.





FABLE XIII.

The Country-Maid and her Milk-Pail.

WHEN men suffer their imagination to amuse them with the prospect of distant and uncertain improvements of their condition ; they frequently fall in real losses, by their inattention to those affairs in which they are immediately concerned.

A Country Maid was walking very deliberately with a Pail of Milk upon her head, when she fell into the following train of reflections : The money, for which I shall sell this milk, will enable me to increase my stock of eggs to three hundred. These eggs, allowing for what may prove addle, and what may be destroyed by vermin, will produce at least two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market about Christmas, when poultry always bears a good price ; so that by May-

day I cannot fail of having money enough to purchase a new gown. Green—let me consider—yes, green becomes my complexion best, and green it shall be. In this dress I will go to the fair, where all the young fellows will strive to have me for a partner: but I shall perhaps refuse every one of them, and with an air of disdain toss from them. —Transported with this triumphant thought, she could not forbear acting with her head what thus passed in her imagination, when down came the Pail of Milk, and with it all her imaginary happiness.



FABLE XIV.

The Cormorant and the Fishes.

IT is very imprudent to trust an enemy, or even a stranger, so far as to put one's self in his power.

A Cormorant, whose eyes were become so dim by age, that he could not discern his prey at the bottom of the waters, bethought himself of a stratagem to supply his wants. Hark you friend, said he to a Gudgeon, whom he observed swimming near the surface of a certain canal, if you have any regard for yourself, or your brethren, go this moment and acquaint them from me, that the owner of this piece of water is determined to drag it a week hence. The Gudgeon immediately swam away, and made his report of this terrible news to a general assembly of the fishes, who unanimously agreed to send him back as their ambassador to the Cormorant. The purport of his commission was to return him their thanks for the intelligence; and to add to their intreaties, that as he had been so good as to inform them of their danger, he would be graciously pleased to put them into a method of escaping it. That I will most readily, returned the artful Cormorant, and assist you with my best services into the bargain. You have only to collect yourselves together at the top of the water, and I will undertake to transport you one by one to my own residence, by the side of a solitary pool, to which no creature but myself ever found the way. The project was perfectly approved by the unwary fishes, and with great expedition performed by the deceitful Cormorant; who having placed them in a shallow water, the bottom of which his eye could easily discern, they were all devoured by him in their turns, as his hunger or luxury required.



FABLE XV.

The Atheist and the Acorn.

IT was the fool who said in his heart, There is no God: into the breast of a wise man such a thought could never have entered. One of those refined reasoners, commonly called Minute Philosophers, was sitting at his ease beneath the shade of a large oak, while at his side the weak branches of a pumpkin trailed upon the ground. This threw our great logician into his old trick of reasoning against Providence. Is it consistent with common sense, said he, that infinite wisdom should create a large and stately tree, with branches of prodigious strength, only to bear so small and insignificant a fruit as an Acorn? Or that so weak a stem, as that of a pumpkin, should be so loaded with so disproportionate a weight? A child may see the absurdity of it. In the midst of this curious speculation, down dropt an Acorn, from

one of the highest branches of the oak, full upon his head. How small a trifle may overturn the systems of mighty philosophers ! Struck with the accident he could not help crying out, How providential it is that this was not a pumpkin !



FABLE XVI.

The Lynx and the Mole.

UNDER the covert of a thick wood, at the foot of a tree, as a Lynx lay whetting his teeth and waiting for his prey, he espied a Mole, half buried under a hillock of her own raising. Alas, poor creature, said the Lynx, how much I pity thee ! Surely Jupiter has been very unkind, to debar thee from the light of the day, which rejoices the whole creation. Thou art certainly not above half alive ; and it would be doing thee a service to put an end to so inanimate a being. I thank you for your kindness, replied the Mole, but I think I have full

as much vivacity as my state and circumstances require. For the rest, I am perfectly well contented with the faculties which Jupiter has allotted me, who I am sure wants not our direction in distributing his gifts with propriety. I have not, 'tis true, your piercing eyes; but I have ears which answer all my purposes equally as well. Hark! for example, I am warned, by a noise which I hear behind you, to fly from danger. So saying, he slunk into the earth; while a javelin from the arm of an Hunter pierced the quick-sighted Lynx to the heart.



FABLE XVII.

The Spider and the Silk-worm.

HOW vainly we promise ourselves, that our flimsy productions will be rewarded with immortal honour! A Spider, busied in spreading his web from one side of a room to the other, was asked

by an industrious Silk-worm, to what end he spent so much time and labour in making such a number of lines and circles? The Spider angrily replied, Do not disturb me, thou ignorant thing: I transmit my ingenuity to posterity, and fame is the object of my wishes. Just as he had spoken, a chambermaid, coming into the room to feed her Silk-worms, saw the Spider at his work, and with one stroke of her broom, swept him away, and destroyed at once his labours, and his hopes of fame.



FABLE XVIII.

The Bee and the Fly.

A BEE observing a Fly frisking about her hive asked him, in a very passionate tone, what he did there? Is it for such scoundrels as you, said she, to intrude into the company of the queens of the air? You have great reason, truly, replied the Fly, to be out of humour: I am sure they must be mad, who would have any concern with

so quarrellsome a nation. And why so? thou saucy malapert, returned the enraged Bee; we have the best laws, and are governed by the best policy in the world. We feed upon the most fragrant flowers, and all our business is to make honey: honey, which equals nectar, thou tasteless wretch, who livest upon nothing but putrefaction and excrement. We live as we can, rejoined the Fly: poverty, I hope, is no crime; but passion is one, I am sure. The honey you make is sweet, I grant you; but your heart is all bitterness: for to be revenged on an enemy, you will destroy your own life; and are so inconsiderate in your rage, as to do more mischief to yourselves than to your adversary. Take my word for it, one had better have less considerable talents, and use them with more discretion.





FABLE XIX.

Genius, Virtue, and Reputation.

GENIUS, Virtue, and Reputation, three intimate friends, agreed to travel over the island of Great-Britain, to see whatever might be worthy of observation. But as some misfortune, said they, may happen to separate us, let us consider before we set out, by what means we may find each other again. Should it be my ill fate, said Genius, to be severed from you, my associates, which Heaven forbid! you may find me kneeling in devotion before the tomb of Shakspeare; or rapt in some grove where Milton talked with angels; or musing in the grotto where Pope caught inspiration. Virtue, with a sigh, acknowledged that her friends were not very numerous: but were I to lose you, she cried, with whom I am at present so happily united, I should choose to take sanctuary in the temples of religion, in the palaces of royalty, or in the stately domes of

ministers of state : but as it may be my ill fortune to be there denied admittance, enquire for some cottage where contentment has a bower, and there you will certainly find me. Ah, my dear companions, said Reputation very earnestly, you, I perceive, when missing may possibly be recovered ; but take care, I intreat you, always to keep sight of me, for if I am once lost, I am never to be retrieved.



FABLE XX.

The Court of Death.

DEATH, the king of terrors, was determined to choose a prime minister ; and his pale courtiers, the ghastly train of diseases, were all summoned to attend : when each preferred his claim to the honour of this illustrious office. Fever urged the numbers he destroyed ; cold palsy set forth his pretensions, by shaking all his limbs ; and dropsy, by

his swelled unwieldy carcase. Gout hobbled up, and alledged his great power in racking every joint ; and asthma's inability to speak, was a strong, though silent, argument in favour of his claim. Stone and colic pleaded their violence ; plague, his rapid progress in destruction ; and consumption, though slow, insisted that he was sure. In the midst of this contention, the court was disturbed with the noise of music, dancing, feasting, and revelry ; when immediately entered a lady, with a bold lascivious air, and a flushed and jovial countenance : she was attended on one hand by a troop of cooks and bacchanals ; and on the other, by a train of wanton youths and damsels, who danced half naked to the softest musical instruments : her name was Intemperance. She waved her hand, and thus addressed the croud of diseases : Give way, ye sickly band of pretenders, nor dare to vie with my superior merits in the service of this great Monarch. Am not I your parent ? the author of your beings ? Do ye not derive your power of shortening human life almost wholly from me ? Who then so fit as myself for this important office ? The grisly Monarch grinned a smile of approbation, placed her at his right hand, and she immediately became his prime favourite, and principal minister.



FABLE XXI.

Industry and Sloth.

HOW many live in the world as useless as if they had never been born ! they pass through life like a bird through the air, and leave no track behind them ; waste the prime of their days in deliberating what they shall do ; and bring them to a period, without coming to any determination.

An indolent young man being asked why he lay in bed so long, jocosely and carelessly answered — Every morning of my life I am hearing causes. I have two fine girls, their names are Industry and Sloth, close at my bedside, as soon as ever I awake, pressing their different suits. One intreats me to get up, the other persuades me to lie still : and then they alternately give me various reasons, why I should rise, and why I should not. This detains

me so long, as it is the duty of an impartial judge to hear all that can be said on either side, that before the pleadings are over, it is time to go to dinner.



FABLE XXII.

The Hare's Ears.

A N elk having accidentally gored a lion, the monarch was so exasperated, that he sent forth an edict, commanding all horned beasts, on pain of death, to depart his dominions. A Hare, observing the shadow of her Ears, was much alarmed at their long and lofty appearance; and running to one of her friends, acquainted him, that she was resolved to quit the country: for should I happen, said she, however undesignedly, to give offence to my superiors, my Ears may be construed to come within the horn-act. Her friend smiled at her apprehensions; and asked, how it was possible that

Ears could be mistaken for horns? Had I no more Ears than an ostrich, replied the Hare, I would not trust them in the hands of an informer; for truth and innocence are arguments of little force, against the logic of power and malice in conjunction.



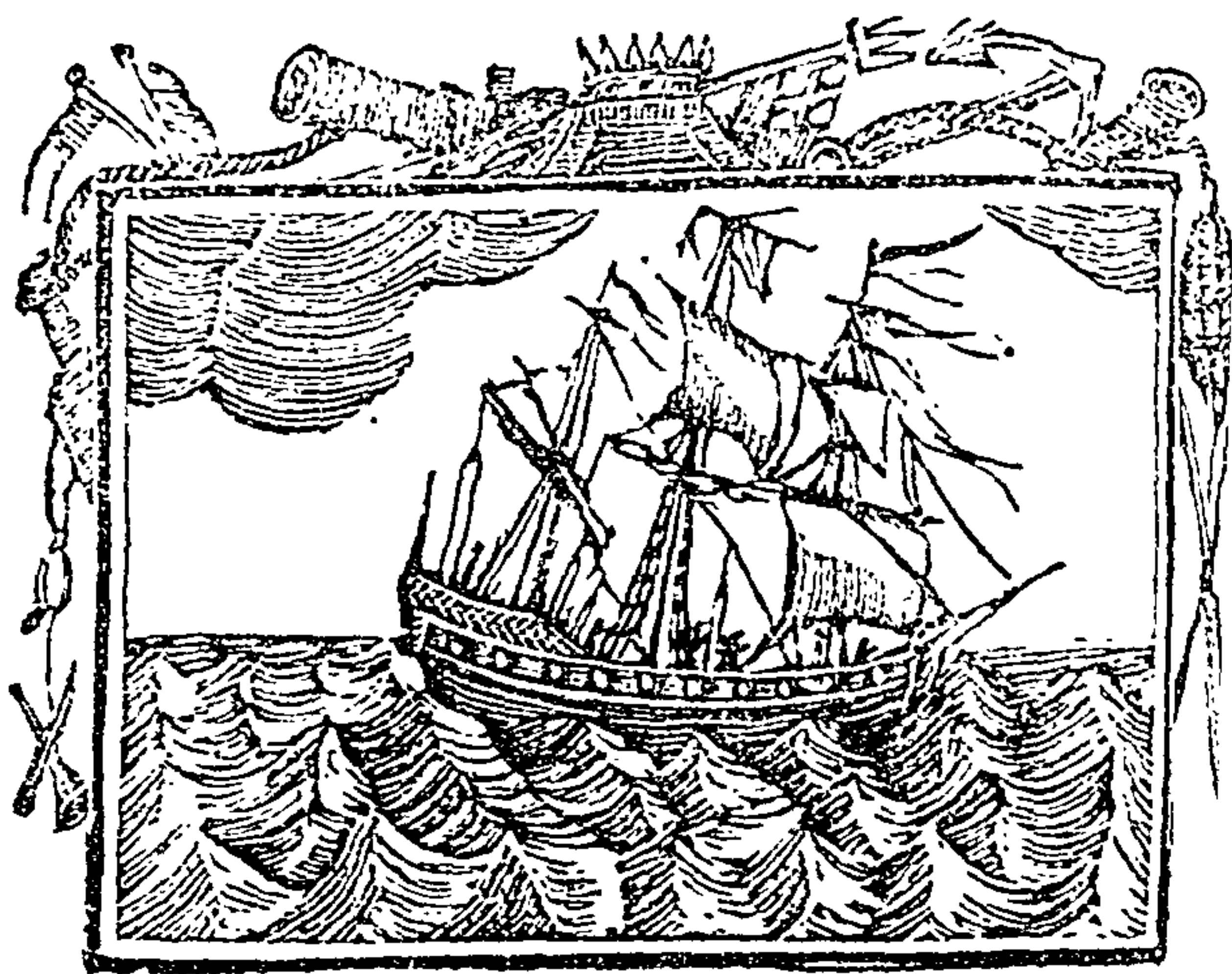
FABLE XXIII.

The Hermit and the Bear.

AN imprudent friend often does as much mischief by his too great zeal, as the worst enemy could effect by his malice.

A certain Hermit having done a good office to a Bear, the grateful creature was so sensible of his obligation, that he begged to be admitted as the guardian and companion of his solitude. The Hermit willingly accepted his offer, and conducted him to his cell; where they passed their time to-

gether in an amicable manner. One very hot day, the Hermit having laid him down to sleep, the officious Bear employed himself in driving away the flies from his patron's face. But in spite of all his care, one of the flies perpetually returned to the attack, and at last settled upon the Hermit's nose. Now I shall have you most certainly, said the Bear; and, with the best intentions imaginable, gave him a violent blow on the face; which very effectually indeed demolished the fly, but at the same time most terribly bruised the face of his benefactor.



FABLE XXIV.

The Passenger and the Pilot.

IT had blown a violent storm at sea, and the whole crew of a large vessel were in imminent danger of shipwreck. After the rolling of the waves were somewhat abated, a certain Passenger,

who had never been at sea before, observing the Pilot to have appeared wholly unconcerned even in their greatest danger, had the curiosity to ask him what death his father died. What death ? said the Pilot, why he perished at sea, as my grandfather did before him. And are you not afraid of trusting yourself to an element that has proved thus fatal to your family ? Afraid ! by no means ; why, we must all die : is not your father dead ? Yes, but he died in his bed. And why then are you not afraid of trusting yourself to your bed ? Because I am there perfectly secure. It may be so, replied the Pilot ; but if the hand of Providence is equally extended over all places, there is no more reason for me to be afraid of going to sea, than for you to be afraid of going to bed.





FABLE XXV.

The partial Judge.

A FARMER came to a neighbouring Lawyer, expressing great concern for an accident which he said had just happened. One of your oxen, continued he, has been gored by an unlucky bull of mine, and I should be glad to know how I am to make you reparation. Thou art a very honest fellow, replied the Lawyer, and wilt not think it unreasonable that I expect one of thy oxen in return. It is no more than justice, quoth the Farmer, to be sure ; but what did I say ?—I mistake—It is your bull that has killed one of my oxen. Indeed ! says the Lawyer, that alters the case : I must inquire into the affair ; and *if*—And *if* ! said the Farmer—the business I find would have been concluded without an *if*, had you been as ready to do justice to others as to exact it from them.



FABLE XXVI.

The Fox that had lost his Tail.

A FOX having been unwarily caught in a trap, with much struggling and difficulty at length disengaged himself; not however without being obliged to leave his tail behind him. The joy he felt at his escape, was somewhat abated when he began to consider the price he had paid for it; and he was a good deal mortified by reflecting on the ridiculous figure he should make among his brethren, without a tail. In the agitation of his thoughts upon this occasion, an expedient occurred to him which he resolved to try, in order to remove this disgraceful singularity. With this view he assembled his tribe together, and set forth in a most elaborate speech how much he had at heart whatever tended to the public weal: he had often thought, he said, on the length and bushiness of their Tails; was verily persuaded that they were

much more burdensome than ornamental, and rendered them besides an easier prey to their enemies. He earnestly recommended it to them therefore to discharge themselves of so useless and dangerous an incumbrance. My good friend, replied an old Fox, who had listened very attentively to his harangue, we are much obliged to you, no doubt, for the concern you express upon our account: but pray turn about before the company, for I cannot for my life help suspecting, that you would not be quite so solicitous to ease us of our tails, if you had not unluckily lost your own.



FABLE XXVII.

The Nobleman and his Son.

A CERTAIN Nobleman, much infected by superstition, dreamed one night that his only Son, a youth about fifteen years of age, was thrown from his horse as he was hunting, and killed upon

the spot. This idle dream made so strong an impression upon the weak and credulous father, that he formed a resolution never more to suffer his Son to partake of this his favourite diversion. The next morning that the hounds went out, the young man requested permission to follow them; but instead of receiving it, as usual, his father acquainted him with his dream, and peremptorily enjoined him to forbear the sport. The youth, greatly mortified at this unexpected refusal, left the room much disconcerted, and it was with some difficulty that he restrained his passion from indecently breaking out in his father's presence. But upon his return to his own apartment, passing through a gallery of pictures, in which was a piece representing a company of gypsies telling a country girl her fortune—'Tis owing, said he, to a ridiculous superstition of the same kind with that of this simple wench, that I am debarred from one of the principal pleasures of my life: at the same time with great emotion, he struck his hand against the canvas, when a rusty old nail behind the picture ran far into his wrist. The pain and anguish of the wound threw the youth into a violent fever, which proved too powerful for the skill of the physicians, and in a few days put an end to his life: illustrating an observation, that an over cautious attention to avoid evils, often bring them upon us; and that we are frequently thrown headlong into misfortunes by the very means we make use of to avoid them.



FABLE XXVIII.

Jupiter and the Herdsman.

A HERDSMAN missed a young heifer out of his grounds, and after having diligently sought for it in vain, when he could by no other means gain intelligence of it, betook himself at last to his prayers. Great Jupiter, said he, shew me but the villain who has done me this injury, and I will give thee in sacrifice the finest kid from my flock. He had no sooner uttered his petition, than turning the corner of a wood, he was struck with the sight of a monstrous lion, preying on the carcase of his heifer. Trembling and pale, O Jupiter, cried he, I offered thee a kid if thou wouldst grant my petition; I now offer thee a Bull, if thou wilt deliver me from the consequence of it.



FABLE XXIX.

The Eagle and the Owl.

AN Eagle and an Owl having entered into a league of mutual amity, one of the articles of their treaty was, that the former should not prey upon the younglings of the latter. But tell me said the Owl, should you know my little ones, if you were to see them? Indeed I should not, replied the Eagle; but if you describe them to me, it will be sufficient. You are to observe then, returned the Owl; in the first place, that the charming creatures are perfectly well shaped; in the next, that there is a remarkable sweetness and vivacity in their countenances; and then there is something in their voices so peculiarly melodious:—'Tis enough, interrupted the Eagle; by these marks I cannot fail of distinguishing them: and you may depend upon their never receiving any injury from me. It happened not long afterwards, as the Eagle was upon

the wing in quest of his prey, that he discovered amidst the ruins of an old castle a nest of grim-faced ugly birds, with gloomy countenances, and a voice like that of the Furies. 'These, undoubtedly, said he, cannot be the offspring of my friend, and so I will venture to make free with them. He had scarce finished his repast and departed, when the Owl returned; who, finding nothing of her brood remaining but some fragments of the mangled carcasses, broke out into the most bitter exclamations against the cruel and perfidious author of her calamity. A neighbouring bat, who overheard her lamentations, and had been witness to what had passed between her and the Eagle, very gravely told her, that she had nobody to blame for this misfortune but herself; whose blind prejudices in favour of her children had prompted her to give such a description of them, as did not resemble them in any one single feature or quality.

Parents should very carefully guard against that weak partiality towards their children, which renders them blind to their failings and imperfections: as no disposition is more likely to prove prejudicial to their future welfare.



FABLE XXX.

The Plague among the Beasts.

A MORTAL distemper once raged among the Beasts, and swept away prodigious numbers. After it had continued some time without abatement, it was concluded in an assembly of the brute creation to be a judgment inflicted upon them for their sins; and a day was appointed for a general confession; when it was agreed, that he who appeared to be the greatest sinner, should suffer death as an atonement for the rest. The Fox was appointed Father Confessor upon the occasion; and the Lion, with great generosity, condescended to be the first in making public confession. For my part, said he, I must own I have been an enormous offender; I have killed many innocent sheep in my time, nay once, but it was a case of necessity, I made a meal of the shepherd. The Fox, with much gravity, acknowledged that these in any other

than the king would have been inexpiable crimes ; but that his majesty had certainly a right to a few silly sheep, nay, and to the shepherd too, in a case of necessity. The judgment of the Fox was applauded by all the superior savages ; and the Tiger, the Leopard, the Bear, and the Wolf, made confession of many enormities of the like sanguinary nature ; which were all palliated or excused with the same lenity and mercy, and their crimes accounted so venial as scarce to deserve the name of offences. At last a poor penitent Ass, with great contrition, acknowledged, that once going through the parson's meadow, being very hungry, and tempted by the sweetness of the grass, he had cropt a little of it, not more however in quantity than the tip of his tongue : he was very sorry for the misdemeanour, and hoped ——— Hope ! exclaimed the Fox with singular zeal, what canst thou hope for, after the commission of so heinous a crime ? What, eat the Parson's grass ! O sacrilege ! This, this is the flagrant wickedness, my brethren, which has drawn the wrath of Heaven upon our heads ; and this the notorious offender whose death must make atonement for all our transgressions. So saying, he ordered his entrails for sacrifice, and the rest of the Beasts went to dinner upon his carcase.





FABLE XXXI.

The Cat, the Cock, and the young Mouse.

A YOUNG Mouse, who had seen very little of the world, came running one day to his mother in great haste—O mother, said he, I am frightened almost to death! I have seen the most extraordinary creature that ever was. He has a fierce, angry look, and struts about upon two legs: a strange piece of flesh grows on his head, and another under his throat, as red as blood: he flapped his arms against his sides, as if he intended to rise into the air; and stretching out his head, he opened a sharp-pointed mouth so wide, that I thought he was preparing to swallow me up: then he roared at me so horribly, that I trembled every joint, and was glad to run home as fast as I could. If I had not been frightened away by this terrible monster, I was just going to commence an acquaintance with the prettiest creature you ever saw. She had a soft fur

skin, thicker than ours, and all beautifully streaked with black and grey ; with a modest look, and a demeanour so humble and courteous, that methought I could have fallen in love with her. Then she had a fine long tail, which she waved about so prettily, and looked so earnestly at me, that I do believe she was just going to speak to me, when the horrid monster frightened me away. Ah, my dear child, said the mother, you have escaped being devoured, but not by that monster you was so much afraid of ; which, in truth, was only a bird, and would have done you no manner of harm. Whereas the sweet creature, of whom you seem so fond, was no other than a Cat ; who, under that hypocritical countenance, conceals the most inveterate hatred to all our race, and subsists entirely by devouring mice. Learn from this incident, my dear, never whilst you live to rely on outward appearances.





FABLE XXXII.

The Farmer and his Dog.

A FARMER who had just stepped into the field to mend a gap in one of his fences, found at his return the cradle, where he had left his only child asleep, turned upside down, the clothes all torn and bloody, and his Dog lying near it besmeared also with blood. Immediately conceiving that the creature had destroyed his child, he instantly dashed out his brains with the hatchet in his hand : when turning up the cradle, he found his child unhurt, and an enormous serpent lying dead on the floor, killed by that faithful Dog, whose courage and fidelity in preserving the life of his son deserved another kind of reward. These affecting circumstances afforded him a striking lesson, how dangerous it is too hastily to give way to the blind impulse of a sudden passion.



FABLE XXXIII.

The Gnat and the Bee.

A GNAT, half starved with cold, and pinched with hunger, came early one morning to a Bee-hive, begged the relief of charity, and offered to teach music in the family, on the humble terms of diet and lodging. The Bee received her petitioner with a cold civility, and desired to be excused. I bring up all my children, said she, to my own useful trade, that they may be able when they grow up to get an honest livelihood by their industry. Besides, how do you think I could be so imprudent as to teach them an art, which I see has reduced its professor to indigence and beggary?



FABLE XXXIV.

The Owl and the Eagle.

AN Owl sat blinking in the trunk of an hollow tree, and arraigned the brightness of the Sun. What is the use of its beams, said she, but to dazzle one's eyes so that one cannot see a Mouse? For my part, I am at a loss to conceive for what purpose so glaring an object was created. We had certainly been much better without it. O fool! replied an Eagle, perched on a branch of the same tree, to rail at excellence which thou canst not taste; ignorant that the fault is not in the Sun, but in thyself. All, 'tis true, have not faculties to understand, nor powers to enjoy the benefit of it: but must the business and the pleasures of the world be obstructed, that an Owl may catch Mice?



FABLE XXXV.

The sick Lion, the Fox, and the Wolf.

A LION, having surfeited himself with feasting too luxuriously on the carcase of a wild boar, was seized with a violent and dangerous disorder. The beasts of the forest flocked in great numbers to pay their respects to him upon the occasion, and scarce one was absent, except the Fox. The Wolf, an ill-natured and malicious beast, seized this opportunity to accuse the Fox of pride, ingratitude, and disaffection to his majesty. In the midst of his invective, the Fox entered, who having heard part of the Wolf's accusation, and observing the Lion's countenance to be kindled into wrath, thus adroitly excused himself, and retorted upon his accuser. I see many here, who, with mere lip-service, have pretended to shew you their loyalty; but for my part, from the moment I heard of your majesty's illness, neglecting useless compliments, I employed myself

day and night to inquire among the most learned physicians, an infallible remedy for your disease, and have at length happily been informed of one. It is a plaister made of part of a Wolf's skin, taken warm from his back, and laid to your majesty's stomach. 'This remedy was no sooner proposed, than it was determined that the experiment should be tried : and whilst the operation was performing the Fox, with a sarcastic smile, whispered this useful maxim in the Wolf's ear—If you would be safe from harm yourself, learn for the future not to meditate mischief against others.



FABLE XXXVI.

The Blind Man and the Lame.

'TIS from our wants and infirmities that almost all the connexions of society take their rise.

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A Blind Man, being stopped in a bad piece of road, meets with a lame Man, and intreats him to guide him through the difficulty he was got into. How can I do that, replied the lame Man, since I am scarce able to drag myself along? But as you appear to be very strong, if you will carry me, we will seek our fortunes together. It will then be my interest to warn you of any thing that may obstruct your way: your feet shall be my feet, and my eyes yours. With all my heart, returned the blind Man; let us render each other our mutual services. So taking his lame companion on his back, they, by means of their union, travelled on with safety and pleasure.

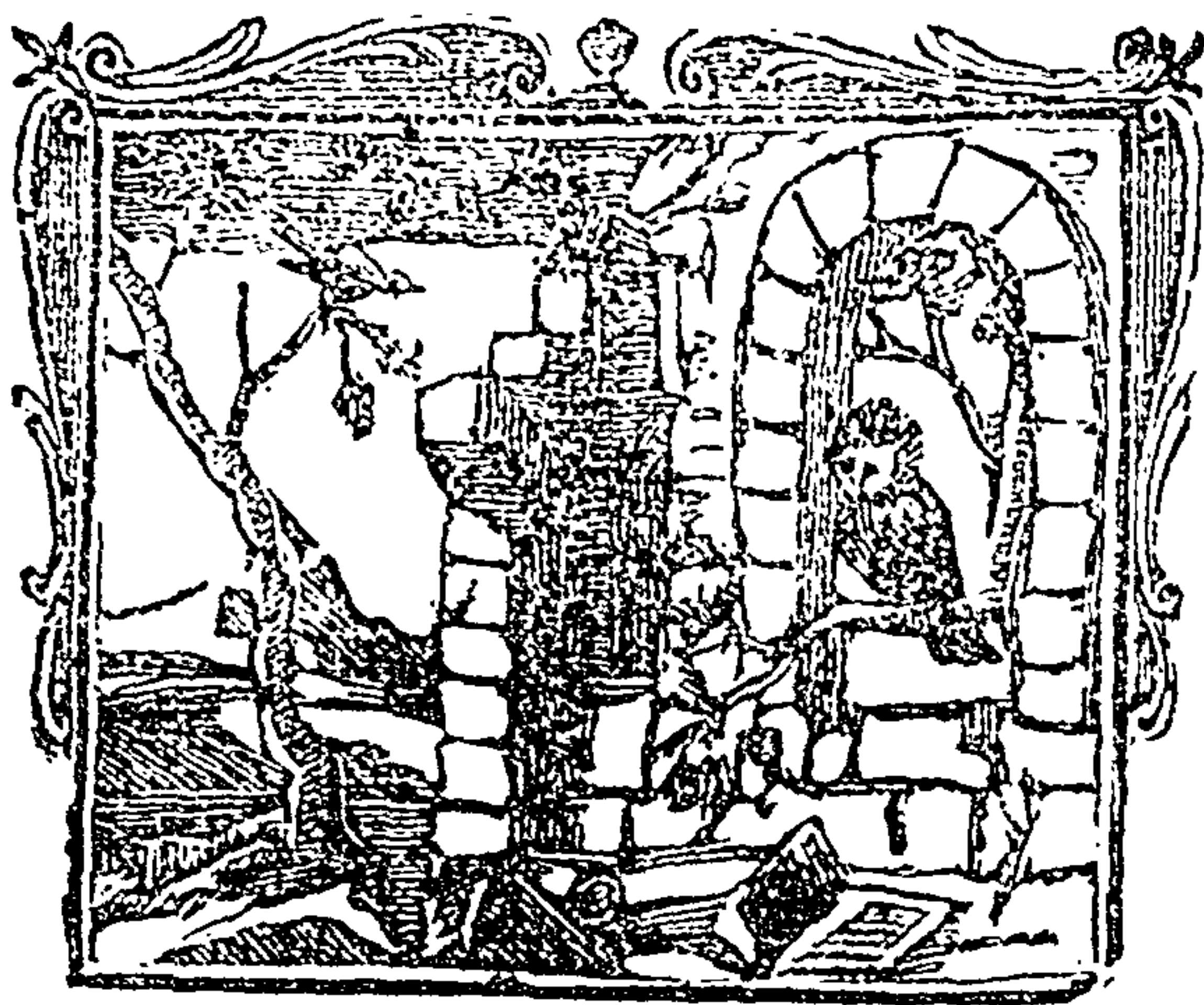


FABLE XXXVII.

The Lion, the Bear, the Monkey, and the Fox.

THE tyrant of the forest issued a proclamation, commanding all his subjects to repair immediately to his royal den. Among the rest, the Bear

made his appearance ; but pretending to be offended with the steams which issued from the monarch's apartments, he was imprudent enough to hold his nose in his majesty's presence. This insolence was so highly resented, that the Lion in a rage laid him dead at his feet. The Monkey, observing what had passed, trembled for his carcase ; and attempted to conciliate favour by the most abject flattery. He began with protesting, that for his part he thought the apartments were perfumed with Arabian spices ; and exclaiming against the rudeness of the Bear, admired the beauty of his majesty's paws, so happily formed, he said, to correct the insolence of clowns. This fulsome adulation, instead of being received as he expected, proved no less offensive than the rudeness of the Bear : and the courtly Monkey was in like manner extended by the side of Sir Bruin. And now his majesty cast his eye upon the Fox. Well, Reynard, said he, and what scent do you discover here ? Great prince, replied the cautious Fox, my nose was never esteemed my most distinguishing sense ; and at present, I would by no means venture to give my opinion, as I have unfortunately got a terrible cold.

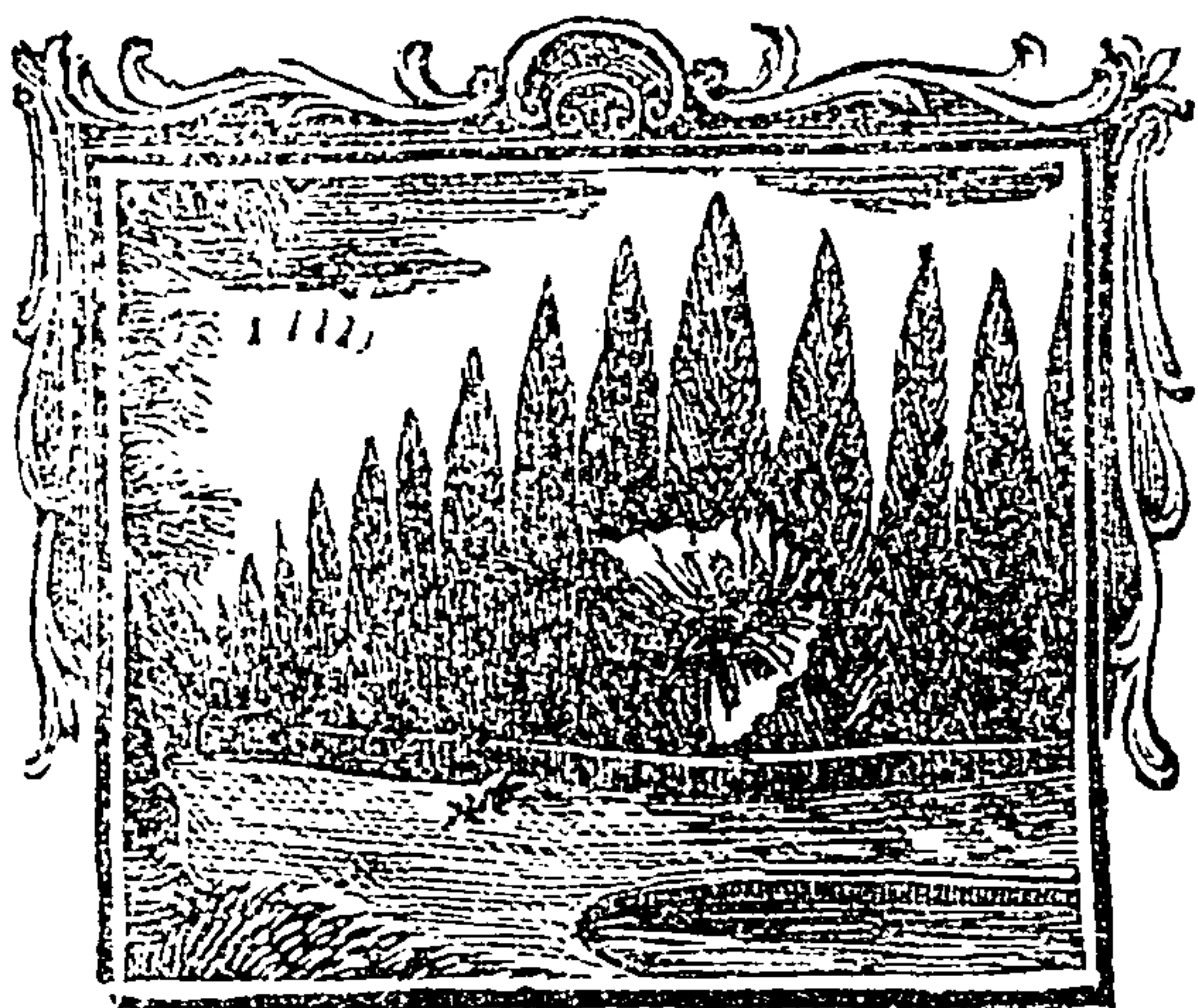


FABLE XXXVIII.

The Owl and the Nightingale.

A FORMAL solemn Owl had many years made his habitation in a grove amongst the ruins of an old monastery, and had pored so often on some mouldy manuscripts, the stupid relics of a monkish library, that he grew infected with the pride and pedantry of the place; and mistaking gravity for wisdom, would sit whole days with his eyes half shut, fancying himself profoundly learned. It happened, as he sat one evening, half buried in meditation, and half asleep, that a Nightingale, unluckily perching near him, began her melodious lays. He started from his reverie, and with a horrid screech interrupting her song—Begone, cried he, thou impertinent minstrel, nor distract with noisy dissonance my sublime contemplations; and know, vain songster, that harmony consists in truth alone, which is gained by laborious study; and not

in languishing notes, fit only to sooth the ear of a love-sick maid. Conceited pedant, returned the Nightingale, whose wisdom lies only in the feathers that muffle up thy unmeaning face; music is a natural and rational entertainment, and though not adapted to the ears of an Owl, has ever been relished and admired by all who are possessed of true taste and elegance.



FABLE XXXIX.

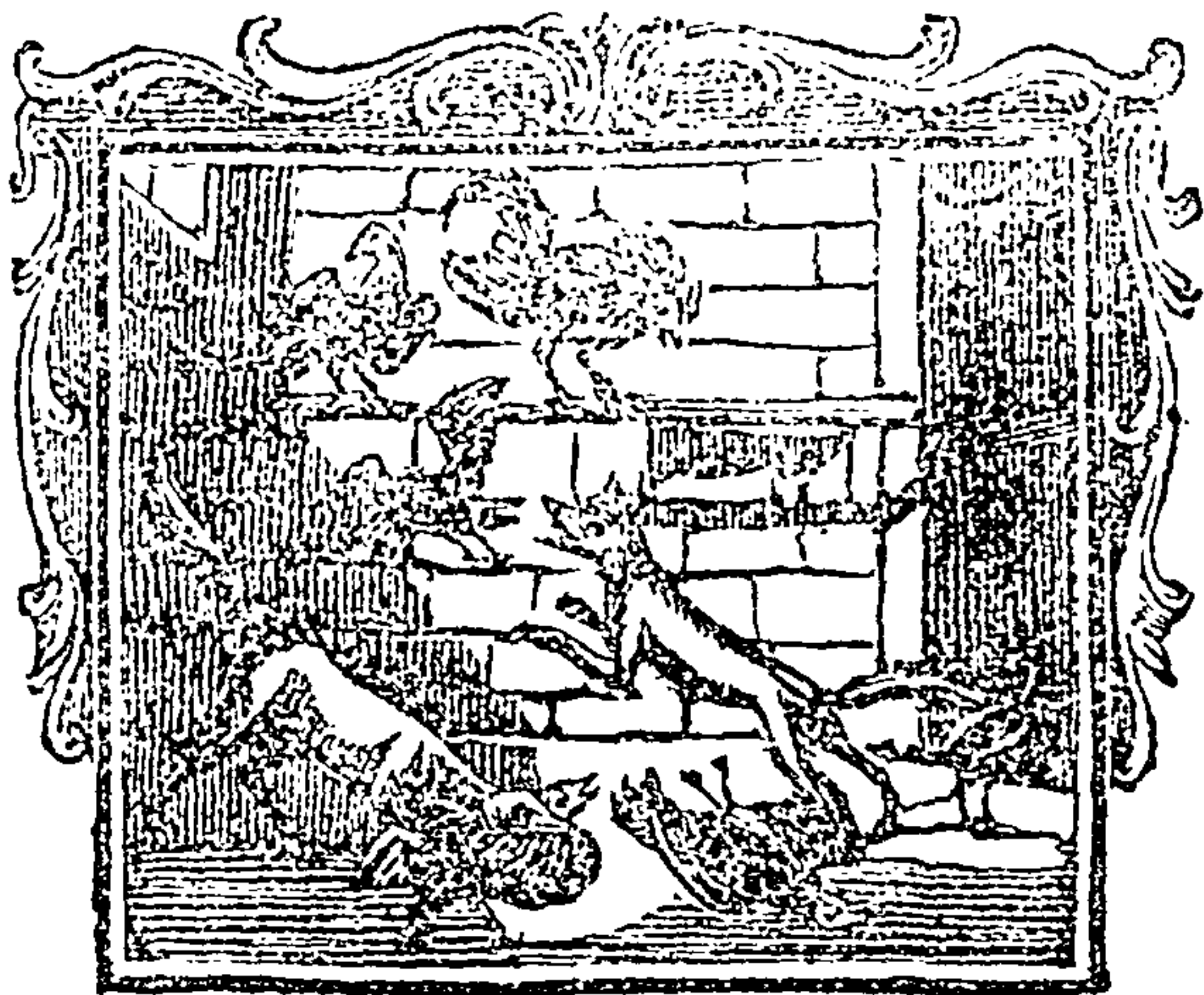
The Ant and the Caterpillar.

AS a Caterpillar was advancing very slowly along one of the alleys of a beautiful garden, he was met by a pert lively Ant, who tossing up her head with a scornful air, cried, Prithee get out of the way, thou poor creeping animal, and do not presume to obstruct the paths of thy superiors, by wriggling along the road, and besmearing the walks appropriated to their footsteps. Poor creature! thou

lookest like a thing half made which nature not liking, threw by unfinished. I could almost pity thee, methinks ; but it is beneath one of my quality to talk to such mean creatures as thou art : and so, poor crawling wretch, adieu.

The humble Caterpillar, struck dumb with this disdainful language, retired, went to work, wound himself up in a silken cell, and at the appointed time came out a beautiful Butterfly. Just as he was sailing forth, he observed the scornful Ant passing by : Proud insect, said he, stop a moment, and learn from the circumstances in which you now see me, never to despise any one for that condition in which Providence has thought fit to place him ; as there is none so mean, but may one day, either in this state or in a better, be exalted above those who looked down upon him with unmerited contempt.





FABLE XL.

The two Foxes.

TWO Foxes formed a stratagem to enter a hen-roost : which having successfully executed, and killed the Cock, the Hens, and the Chickens, they began to feed upon them with singular satisfaction. One of the Foxes, who was young and inconsiderate, was for devouring them all upon the spot : the other, who was old and covetous, proposed to reserve some of them for another time ; for experience, child, said he, has made me wise, and I have seen many unexpected events since I came into the world. Let us provide, therefore, against what may happen, and not consume all our store at one meal. All this is wondrous wise, replied the young Fox ; but for my part, I am resolved not to stir till I have eaten as much as will serve me a whole week ; for who would be mad enough to return hither ? when it is certain the owner of

these fowls will watch for us, and if he should catch us would certainly put us to death. After this short discourse, each pursued his own scheme : the young Fox eat till he burst himself, and had scarcely strength to reach his hole before he died. The old one, who thought it much better to deny his appetite for the present, and lay up provision for the future, returned the next day, and was killed by the Farmer. Thus every age has its peculiar vice ; the young suffer by their insatiable thirst after pleasure ; and the old, by their incorrigible and inordinate avarice.



FABLE XLI.

The conceited Owl.

A YOUNG Owl, having accidentally seen himself in a crystal fountain, conceived the highest opinion of his personal perfections. 'Tis time, said he, that Hymen should give me children as beauti-

ful as myself to the glory of the night, and the ornament of our groves. What pity would it be, if the race of the most accomplished of birds should be extinct for want of a mate ! Happy the female who is destined to spend her life with me ! Full of these self approving thoughts, he entreated the crow to propose a match between him and the royal daughter of the eagle. Do you imagine, said the crow, that the noble eagle, whose pride it is to gaze on the brightest of the heavenly luminaries, will consent to marry his daughter to you, who cannot so much as open your eyes whilst it is day-light ? but the self-conceited Owl was deaf to all that his friend could urge ; who, after much persuasion, was at length prevailed upon to undertake the commission. His proposal was received in the manner that might be expected : the king of birds laughed him to scorn. However, being a monarch of some humour, he ordered him to acquaint the Owl, that if he would meet him the next morning at sun-rise in the middle of the sky, he would consent to give him his daughter in marriage. The presumptuous Owl undertook to perform the condition ; but being dazzled with the sun, and his head growing giddy, he fell from his height upon a rock ; from whence being pursued by a flight of birds, he was glad at last to make his escape into the hollow of an old oak ; where he passed the remainder of his days in that obscurity for which nature designed him.



FABLE XLII.

The Fox and the Cat.

NOTHING is more common than for men to condemn the very same actions in others, which they practise themselves whenever occasion offers.

A Fox and a Cat having made a party to travel together, beguiled the tediousness of their journey by a variety of philosophical conversations. Of all the moral virtues, exclaimed Reynard, mercy is sure the noblest ! What say you, my sage friend, is it not so ? Undoubtedly, replied the Cat, with a most demure countenance ; nothing is more becoming, in a creature of any sensibility, than a compassionate disposition. While they were thus moralizing, and mutually complimenting each other on the wisdom of their respective reflections, a wolf darted out from a wood upon a flock of sheep,

which were feeding in an adjacent meadow ; and without being in the least affected by the moving lamentations of a poor lamb, devoured it before their eyes. Horrible cruelty ! exclaimed the Cat ; why does he not feed on vermin, instead of making his barbarous meals on such innocent creatures ? Reynard agreed with his friend in the observation ; to which he added several very pathetic remarks on the odiousness of a sanguinary temper. Their indignation was rising in its warmth and zeal, when they arrived at a little cottage by the way-side ; where the tender-hearted Reynard immediately cast his eye upon a fine cock that was strutting about the yard. And now, adieu moralizing : he leapt over the pales, and without any sort of scruple, demolished his prize in an instant. In the mean while, a plump mouse, which ran out of the stable, totally put to flight our Cat's philosophy, who fell to the repast without the least commiseration.





FABLE XLIII.

The two Horses.

TWO Horses were travelling the road together; one loaded with a sack of flour, the other with a sum of money. The latter proud of his splendid burden, tossed up his head with an air of conscious superiority, and every now and then cast a look of contempt upon his humble companion. In passing through a wood, they were met by a gang of highwaymen, who immediately seized upon the Horse that was carrying the treasure: but the spirited Steed not being altogether disposed to stand so quietly as was necessary for their purpose, they beat him most unmercifully, and after plundering him of his boasted load, left him to lament at his leisure the cruel bruises he had received. Friend, said his despised companion to him, who had now reason to triumph in his turn, distinguished posts are often dangerous to those who possess them: if you had served a miller, as I do, you might have travelled the road unmolested.



FABLE XLIV.

The Dove and the Ant.

WE should be always ready to do good offices, even to the meanest of our fellow-creatures; as there is no one to whose assistance we may not, upon some occasion or other, be greatly indebted.

A Dove was sipping from the banks of a rivulet, when an Ant, who was at the same time trailing a grain of corn along the edge of a brook, inadvertently fell in. The Dove observing the helpless insect struggling in vain to reach the shore, was touched with compassion; and plucking a blade of grass, dropped it into the stream; by means of which the poor Ant, like a ship-wrecked sailor upon a plank, got safe to land. She had scarcely arrived there, when she perceived a fowler just going to

discharge his piece at her deliverer; upon which she instantly crept up his foot and stung him on the ankle. The sportsman starting, occasioned a rustling among the boughs, which alarmed the Dove, who immediately sprung up, and by that means escaped the danger with which she was threatened.



FABLE XLV.

The Parrot.

A CERTAIN Widower, in order to amuse his solitary hours, and in some measure supply the conversation of his departed help-mate of loquacious memory, determined to purchase a Parrot. With this view he applied to a dealer in birds, who shewed him a large collection of Parrots of various kinds. Whilst they were exercising their talkative talents before him, one repeating the cries of the town, another asking for a cup of sack, and a third bawling out for a coach, he observed a green Par-

set, perched in a thoughtful manner at a distance upon the foot of a table : And so you, my grave gentleman, said he, are quite silent. To which the Parrot replied, like a philosophical bird, “ I think the more.” Pleased with this sensible answer, our Widower immediately paid down his price, and took home the bird, conceiving great things from a creature who had given so striking a specimen of his parts. But after having instructed him during a whole month, he found, to his great disappointment, that he could get nothing more from him than the fatiguing repetition of the same dull sentence, “ I think the more.” I find, said he, in great wrath, that thou art a most invincible fool : and ten times more a fool was I, for having formed a favourable opinion of thy abilities upon no better foundation than an affected solemnity.





FABLE XLVI.

The Cat and the Bat.

A CAT having devoured her master's favourite bulfinch, overheard him threatening to put her to death the moment he could find her. In this distress she preferred a prayer to Jupiter; vowing, if he would deliver her from her present danger, that never while she lived would she eat another bird. Not long afterwards, a Bat most invitingly flew into the room where Puss was purring in the window. The question was, how to act upon so tempting an occasion? Her appetite pressed hard on one side; and her vow threw some scruples in her way on the other. At length she hit upon a most convenient distinction to remove all difficulties, by determining that as a bird indeed it was an unlawful prize, but as a mouse she might very conscientiously eat it; and accordingly, without further debate, fell to the repast.

Thus it is that men are apt to impose upon themselves by vain and groundless distinctions, when conscience and principle are at variance with interest and inclination.



FABLE XLVII.

The two Lizards.

AS two Lizards were basking under a south-wall, How contemptible, said one of them, is our condition! We exist, 'tis true, but that is all: for we hold no sort of rank in the creation, and are utterly unnoticed by the world. Cursed obscurity! Why was I not rather born a stag, to range at large, the pride and glory of some royal forest? It happened, that in the midst of these unjust murmurs, a pack of hounds was heard in full cry after the very creature he was envying, who being quite spent with the chase, was torn in pieces by the dogs, in sight of our two Lizards. And is this the lordly stag, whose place in the creation you

wish to hold ? said the wiser Lizard to his complaining friend : Let his sad fate teach you to bless providence for placing you in that humble situation, which secures you from the dangers of a more elevated rank.



FABLE XLVIII.

Jupiter's Lottery.

JUPITER, in order to please mankind, directed Mercury to give notice that he had established a Lottery, in which there were no blanks ; and that, amongst a variety of other valuable chances, Wisdom was the highest prize. It was Jupiter's command, that in this Lottery some of the gods should also become adventurers. The tickets being disposed of, and the wheels placed, Mercury was employed to preside at the drawing. It happened that the best prize fell to Minerva : upon which a general murmur ran through the assembly, and hints were

thrown out that Jupiter had used some unfair practices to secure this desirable lot to his daughter. Jupiter, that he might at once both punish and silence these impious clamours of the human race, presented them with Folly in the place of Wisdom; with which they went away perfectly well contented. And from that time the greatest fools have always looked upon themselves as the wisest men.



FABLE XLIX.

The litigious Cats.

TWO Cats having stolen some cheese, could not agree about dividing their prize. In order therefore to settle the dispute, they consented to refer the matter to a monkey. The proposed arbitrator very readily accepted the office, and producing a balance, put a part into each scale. Let me see, said he, ay—this lump outweighs the other:

and immediately bit off a considerable piece, in order to reduce it, he observed, to an equilibrium. The opposite scale was now become the heaviest; which afforded our conscientious judge an additional reason for a second mouthful. Hold, hold, said the two Cats, who began to be alarmed for the event, give us our respective shares, and we are satisfied. If You are satisfied, returned the monkey, justice is not : a case of this intricate nature is by no means so soon determined. Upon which he continued to nibble first at one piece, and then the other, till the poor Cats, seeing their cheese gradually diminishing, entreated him to give himself no farther trouble, but deliver to them what remained. Not so fast, I beseech you, friends, replied the Monkey; we owe justice to ourselves as well as to you : what remains is due to me in right of my office. Upon which he crammed the whole into his mouth, and with great gravity dismissed the court.





FABLE L.

The two Dogs.

HASTY and inconsiderate connexions are generally attended with great disadvantages: and much of every man's good or ill fortune depends upon the choice he makes of his friends.

A good-natured Spaniel overtook a surly Mastiff, as he was travelling upon the high road. Tray, although an entire stranger to Tiger, very civilly accosted him; and if it would be no interruption, he said, he should be glad to bear him company on his way. Tiger, who happened not to be altogether in so growling a mood as usual, accepted the proposal; and they very amicably pursued their journey together. In the midst of their conversation they arrived at the next village, where Tiger began to display his malignant disposition, by an

unprovoked attack upon every Dog he met. The villagers immediately sallied forth with great indignation to rescue their respective favourites; and falling upon our two friends without distinction, or mercy, poor Tray was most cruelly treated, for no other reason but his being found in bad company.



FABLE LI.

Death and Cupid.

JUPITER sent forth Death and Cupid to travel round the world, giving each of them a bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows at his back. It was ordered by the Supreme Disposer of all events, that the arrows of Love should only wound the young, in order to supply the decays of mortal men; and those of Death were to strike old age, and free the world from an useless charge. Our travellers, being one day extremely fatigued with

their journey, rested themselves under the covert of a wood, and throwing down their arrows in a promiscuous manner, they both fell fast asleep. They had not reposed themselves long, before they were awakened by a sudden noise ; when hastily gathering up their arms, each in a confusion took by mistake some of the darts that belonged to the other. By this means, it frequently happened that Death vanquished the young, and Cupid subdued the old. Jupiter observed the error, but did not think proper to redress it ; foreseeing that some good might arise from their unlucky exchange. And, in fact, if men were wise, they would learn from this mistake to be apprehensive of Death in their youth, and to guard against the amorous passions in their old age.





FABLE LII.

The Mock Bird.

THERE is a certain Bird in the West-Indies, which has the faculty of mimicing the notes of every other songster, without being able himself to add any original strains to the concert. As one of these Mock birds was displaying his talent of ridicule among the branches of a venerable wood: 'Tis very well, said a little warbler, speaking in the name of all the rest, we grant you that our music is not without its faults: but why will you not favour us with a strain of your own?



FABLE LIII.

The Spectacles.

HOW strangely all mankind differ in their opinions! and how strongly each is attached to his own!

Jupiter one day, enjoying himself over a bowl of nectar, and in a merry humour, determined to make mankind a present. Momus was appointed to convey it to them; who, mounted on a rapid car, was presently on earth. Come hither, says he, ye happy mortals; great Jupiter has opened for your benefits his all-gracious hands. 'Tis true, he made you somewhat short-sighted, but to remedy that inconvenience, behold how he has favoured you! So saying, he unloosed his portmanteau, when an infinite number of Spectacles tumbled out, and were picked up by the crowd with all

the eagerness imaginable. There were enough for all, every man had his pair. But it was soon found that these Spectacles did not represent objects to all mankind alike : for one pair was purple, another blue ; one was white, and another black : some of the glasses were red, some green, and some yellow. In short, there were all manner of colours, and every shade of colour. However, notwithstanding this diversity, every man was charmed with his own, as believing it the truest ; and enjoyed in opinion all the satisfaction of reality.



FABLES.



BOOK III.



NEWLY INVENTED.



FABLE I.

The Red-breast and the Sparrow.

AS a Red-breast was singing on a tree by the side of a rural cottage, a Sparrow perched upon the thatch, took occasion thus to reprimand him : and dost Thou, said he, with thy dull autumnal note, presume to emulate the Birds of Spring ? Can thy weak warblings pretend to vie with the sprightly accents of the thrush and the blackbird ? with the various melody of the lark or the nightingale ? whom otherbirds, far thy superiors, have been long content to admire in silence. Judge with candour at least, replied the Robin, nor impute those efforts to ambition solely, which may sometimes flow from Love of the Art. I reverence indeed, but by no means envy, the birds whose fame has stood the test of ages. Their songs have charmed both hill and dale ; but their season is past, and their throats are silent. I feel not, however, the ambition to

surpass or equal them : my efforts are of a much humbler nature ; and I may surely hope for pardon, while I endeavour to cheer these forsaken valleys, by an attempt to imitate the strains I love.

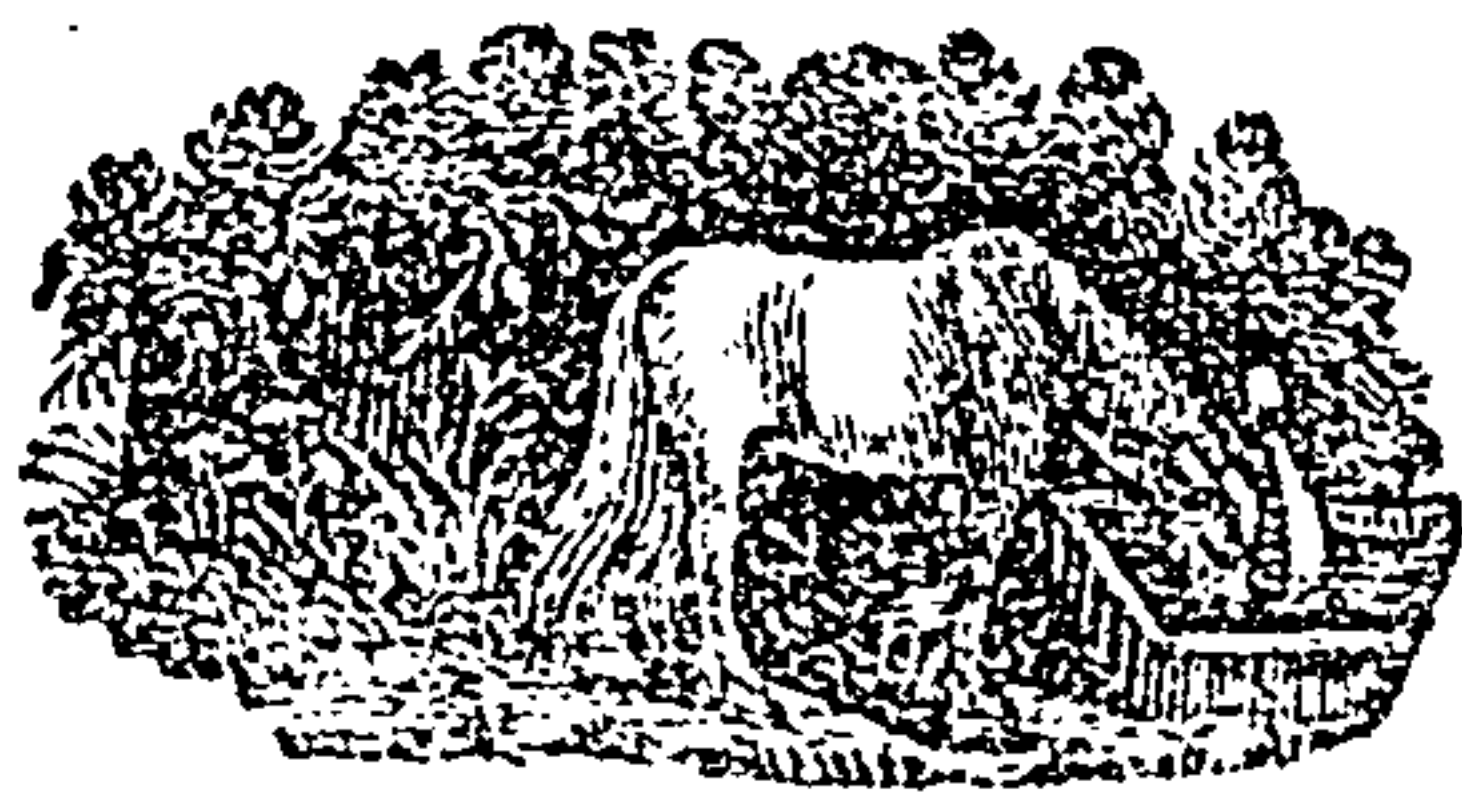


FABLE II.

The two Bees.

ON a fine morning in May, two Bees set forward in quest of honey ; the one wise and temperate, the other careless and extravagant. They soon arrived at a garden enriched with aromatic herbs, the most fragrant flowers, and the most delicious fruits. They regaled themselves for a time on the various dainties that were spread before them : the one loading his thighs at intervals with provisions for the hive against the distant winter ; the other, revelling in sweets without regard to any thing but his present gratification. At length they

found a wide-mouthed phial, that hung beneath the bough of a peach-tree, filled with honey ready tempered, and exposed to their taste in the most alluring manner. The thoughtless Epicure, spite of all his friend's remonstrances, plunged headlong into the vessel, resolving to indulge himself in all the pleasures of sensuality. The Philosopher, on the other hand, sipped a little with caution, but being suspicious of danger, flew off to fruits and flowers; where, by the moderation of his meals, he improved his relish for the true enjoyment of them. In the evening, however, he called upon his friend, to inquire whether he would return to the hive; but found him surfeited in sweets, which he was as unable to leave as to enjoy. Clogged in his wings, enfeebled in his feet, and his whole frame totally enervated, he was but just able to bid his friend adieu, and to lament with his latest breath that though a taste of pleasure might quicken the relish of life, an unrestrained indulgence is inevitable destruction.





FABLE III.

The Diamond and the Glow-worm.

A DIAMOND happened to fall from the solitaire of a young lady, as she was walking one evening on a terrace in the garden. A Glow-worm, who had beheld it sparkle in its descent, soon as the gloom of night had eclipsed its lustre, began to mock and to insult it. Art thou that wondrous thing; that vauntest of thy prodigious brightness? Where now is all thy boasted brilliancy? Alas, in evil hour has fortune thrown thee within the reach of my superior blaze. Conceited insect, replied the Gem, that owest thy feeble glimmer to the darkness that furrounds thee: know, my lustre bears the test of day, and even derives its chief advantage from that distinguishing light, which discovers thee to be no more than a dark and paltry Worm.



FABLE IV.

The Ostrich and the Pelican.

THE Ostrich one day met the Pelican, and observing her breast all bloody, Good God ! says she to her, what is the matter ? What accident has befallen you ? You certainly have been seized by some savage beast of prey, and have with difficulty escaped from his merciless claws. Do not be surprised, friend, replied the Pelican ; no such accident, nor indeed any thing more than common hath happened to me. I have only been engaged in my ordinary employment of tending my nest, of feeding my dear little ones, and nourishing them with the vital blood from my bosom. Your answer, returned the Ostrich, astonishes me still more than the horrid figure you make. What ! is this your practice, to tear your own flesh, to spill your own blood, and to sacrifice yourself in this cruel manner to the important cravings of your young ones ? I

know not which to pity most, your misery, or your folly. Be advised by me; have some regard for yourself; and leave off this barbarous custom of mangling your own body: as for your children, commit them to the care of Providence, and make yourself quite easy about them. My example may be of use to you: I lay my eggs upon the ground, and just cover them lightly over with sand: if they have the good luck to escape being crushed by the tread of man or beast, the warmth of the sun broods upon, and hatches them; and in due time my young ones come forth. I leave them to be nursed by nature, and fostered by the elements; I give myself no trouble about them, and I neither know nor care what becomes of them. Unhappy wretch, says the Pelican, who art hardened against thy offspring, and through want of natural affection renderest thy travail fruitless to thyself! who knowest not the sweets of a parent's anxiety, the tender delight of a mother's sufferings! It is not I, but thou that art cruel to thy own flesh. Thy insensibility may exempt thee from a temporary inconvenience, and an inconsiderable pain; but at the same time it makes thee inattentive to a most necessary duty, and incapable of relishing the pleasure that attends it: a pleasure, the most exquisite that nature hath indulged to us; in which pain itself is swallowed up and lost, or only serves to heighten the enjoyment.



FABLE V.

The Hounds in Couples.

A HUNTSMAN was leading forth his Hounds one morning to the chase, and had linked several of the young Dogs in Couples, to prevent their following every scent, and hunting disorderly, as their own inclinations and fancy should direct them. Among others, it was the fate of Jowler and Vixen to be thus yoked together. Jowler and Vixen were both young and inexperienced ; but had for some time been constant companions, and seemed to have entertained a great fondness for each other ; they used to be perpetually playing together, and in any quarrel that happened, always took one another's part ; it might have been expected therefore, that it would not be disagreeable to them to be still more closely united. However, in fact, it proved otherwise : they had not been long joined together before both parties were observed to express

uneasiness at their present situation. Different inclinations and opposite wills began to discover and to exert themselves: if one chose to go this way, the other was as eager to take the contrary; if one was pressing forwards, the other was sure to lag behind; Vixen pulled back Jowler, and Jowler dragged along Vixen: Jowler growled at Vixen, and Vixen snapped at Jowler: till at last it came to a downright quarrel between them; and Jowler treated Vixen in a very rough and ungenerous manner, without any regard to the inferiority of her strength, or the tenderness of her sex. As they were thus continually vexing and tormenting one another, an old Hound, who had observed all that passed, came up to them, and thus reproved them: “What a couple of silly Puppies you are, to be perpetually worrying yourselves at this rate! What hinders your going on peaceably and quietly together? Cannot you compromise the matter between you by each consulting the other’s inclination a little? at least, try to make a virtue of necessity, and submit to what you cannot remedy: you cannot get rid of the chain, but you may make it sit easy upon you. I am an old Dog, and let my age and experience instruct you: when I was in the same circumstances with you, I soon found, that thwarting my companion was only tormenting myself; and my yoke-fellow happily came into the same way of thinking. We endeavoured to join in the same pursuits, and to follow one another’s inclinations; and so we jogged on together, not only with ease and quiet, but with comfort and pleasure. We found by experience, that mutual compliance not only compensates for liberty, but is even attended with a satisfaction and delight, beyond what liberty itself can give.”



FABLE VI.

The Miser and the Magpye.

AS a Miser sat at his desk, counting over his heaps of gold, a Magpye, eloped from his cage, picked up a guinea, and hopped away with it. The Miser, who never failed to count his money over a second time, immediately missed the piece, and rising up from his seat in the utmost consternation, observed the felon hiding it in a crevice of the floor. And art thou, cried he, that worst of thieves, who hast robbed me of my gold, without the plea of necessity, and without regard to its proper use? but thy life shall atone for so preposterous a villany. Soft words, good master, quoth the Magpye. Have I then injured you in any other sense than you defraud the public? and am I not using your money in the same manner you do yourself? If I must lose my life for hiding a single guinea, what do you, I pray, deserve, who secrete so many thousands?

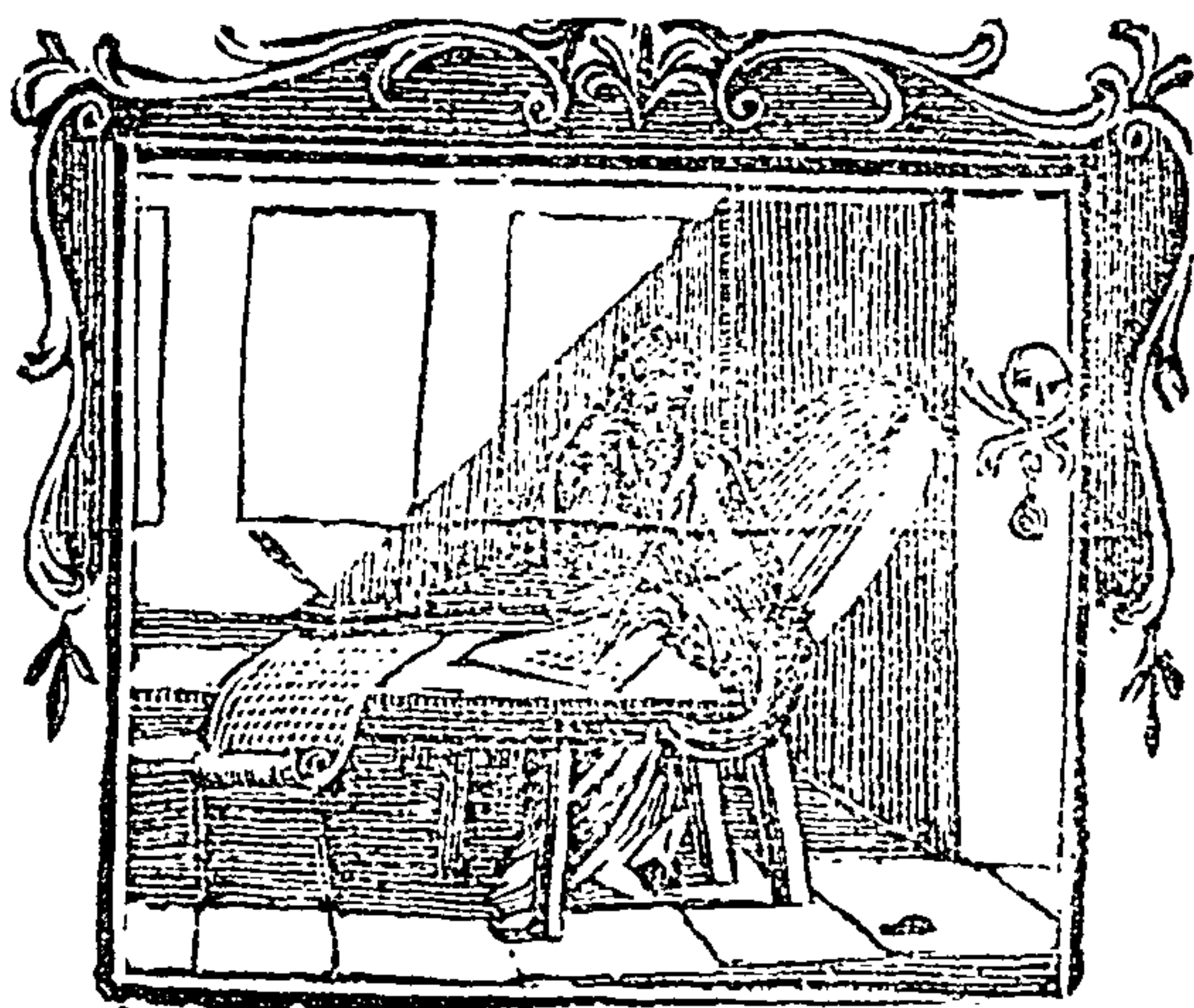


FABLE VII.

'The Sensitive Plant and the Thistle.

A THISTLE happened to spring up very near to a Sensitive Plant. The former observing the extreme bashfulness and delicacy of the latter, addressed her in the following manner : Why are you so modest and reserved, my good neighbour, as to withdraw your leaves at the approach of strangers ? Why do you shrink as if you were afraid, from the touch of every hand ? Take example and advice from me : If I liked not their familiarity, I would make them keep their distance, nor should any saucy finger provoke me unrevenged. Our tempers and qualities, replied the other are widely different : I have neither the ability nor inclination to give offence : you, it seems, are by no means destitute of either. My desire is to live peaceably in the station wherein I was placed : and though my humility may now and then cause me a mo-

ment's uneasiness, it tends on the whole to preserve my tranquillity. The case is otherwise with you, whose irritable temper, and revengeful disposition, will probably, one time or other, be the cause of your destruction. While they were thus arguing the point, the Gardener came with his little spaddle, in order to lighten the earth round the stem of the Sensitive Plant; but perceiving the Thistle, he thrusts his instrument through the root of it, and tossed it out of his garden.



FABLE VIII.

The Poet and the Death-watch.

AS a Poet sat in his closet, feasting his imagination on the hopes of Fame and Immortality, he was startled on a sudden with the ominous sound of a Death-watch. However, immediately recollecting himself—Vain insect, said he, cease thy impertinent forebodings, sufficient indeed to

frighten the weakness of women, or of children; but far beneath the notice of a Poet and Philosopher. As for me, whatever accident may threaten my life, my fame, spite of thy prognostics, shall live to future ages. It may be so, replied the insect: I find at least, thou hadst rather listen to the maggot in thy head, than to the worm beneath thy table; but know, that the suggestions of vanity are altogether as deceitful as those of superstition.



FABLE IX.

Pythagoras and the Critic.

PYTHAGORAS was one day very earnestly engaged in taking an exact measure of the length of the Olympic course. One of those conceited Critics who aim at every thing, and are ready to interpose with their opinion upon all subjects, happened to be present; and could not help imil-

ing to himself to see the Philosopher so employed, and to observe what great attention and pains he bestowed upon such a business. And pray, says he, accosting Pythagoras, may I presume to ask with what design you have given yourself this trouble? Of that, replied the Philosopher, I shall very readily inform you. We are assured, that Hercules, when he instituted the Olympic games, himself laid out this course by measure, and determined it to be the length of six hundred feet, measuring it by the standard of his own foot. Now by taking an exact measure of this space, and seeing how much it exceeds the measure of the same number of feet now in use, we can find how much the foot of Hercules, and in proportion his whole stature, exceeded that of the present generation. A very curious speculation, says the Critic, and of great use and importance, no doubt! And so you will demonstrate to us, that the bulk of this fabulous Hero was equal to his extravagant enterprises and his marvellous exploits. And pray, Sir, what may be the result of your enquiry at last? I suppose, you can now tell me exactly to an hair's breadth, how tall Hercules was. The result of my inquiry, replied the Philosopher, is this; and it is a conclusion of greater use and importance than you seem to expect from it; that if you will always estimate the labours of the Philosopher, the designs of the Patriot, and the actions of the Hero, by the standard of your own narrow conceptions, you will ever be greatly mistaken in your judgment concerning them.

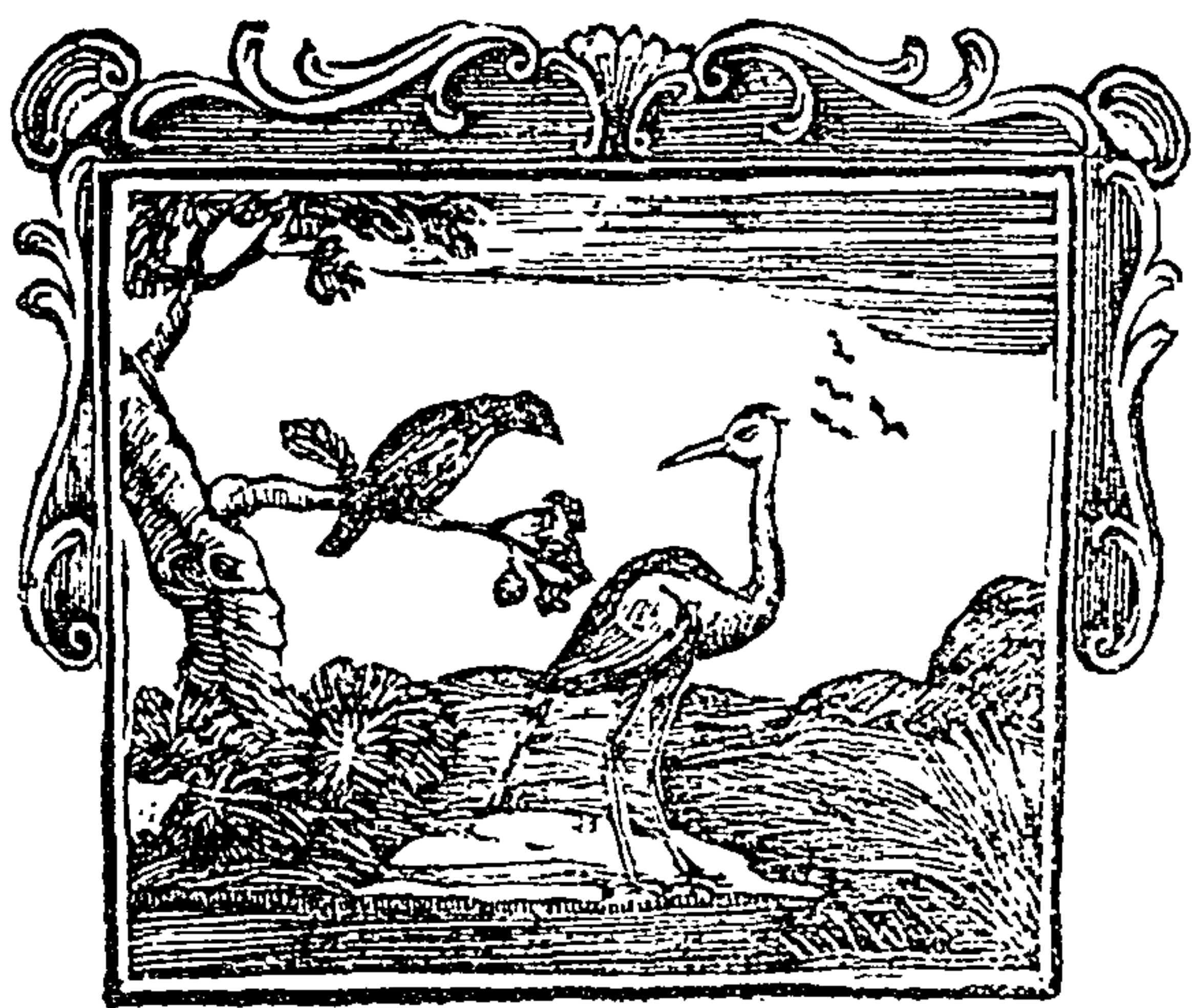


FABLE X.

The Bear.

A BEAR, who was bred in the savage deserts of Siberia, had an inclination to see the world. He travelled from forest to forest, from one kingdom to another, making many profound observations in his way. Among the rest of his excursions, he came by accident into a farmer's yard, where he saw a number of poultry standing to drink by the side of a pool. Observing that at every sip they turned up their heads towards the sky, he could not forbear inquiring the reason of so peculiar a ceremony. They told him, that it was by way of returning thanks to Heaven for the benefits they received; and was indeed an ancient and religious custom, which they could not, with a safe conscience, or without impiety, omit. Here the Bear burst into a fit of laughter, at once mimicking their gestures, and ridiculing their super-

stition, in the most contemptuous manner.—On this, the cock, with a spirit suitable to the boldness of his character, addressed him in the following words : As you are a stranger, sir, you perhaps may be excused the indecency of this behaviour ; yet give me leave to tell you, that none but a Bear would ridicule any religious ceremonies whatsoever, in the presence of those who believe them of importance.

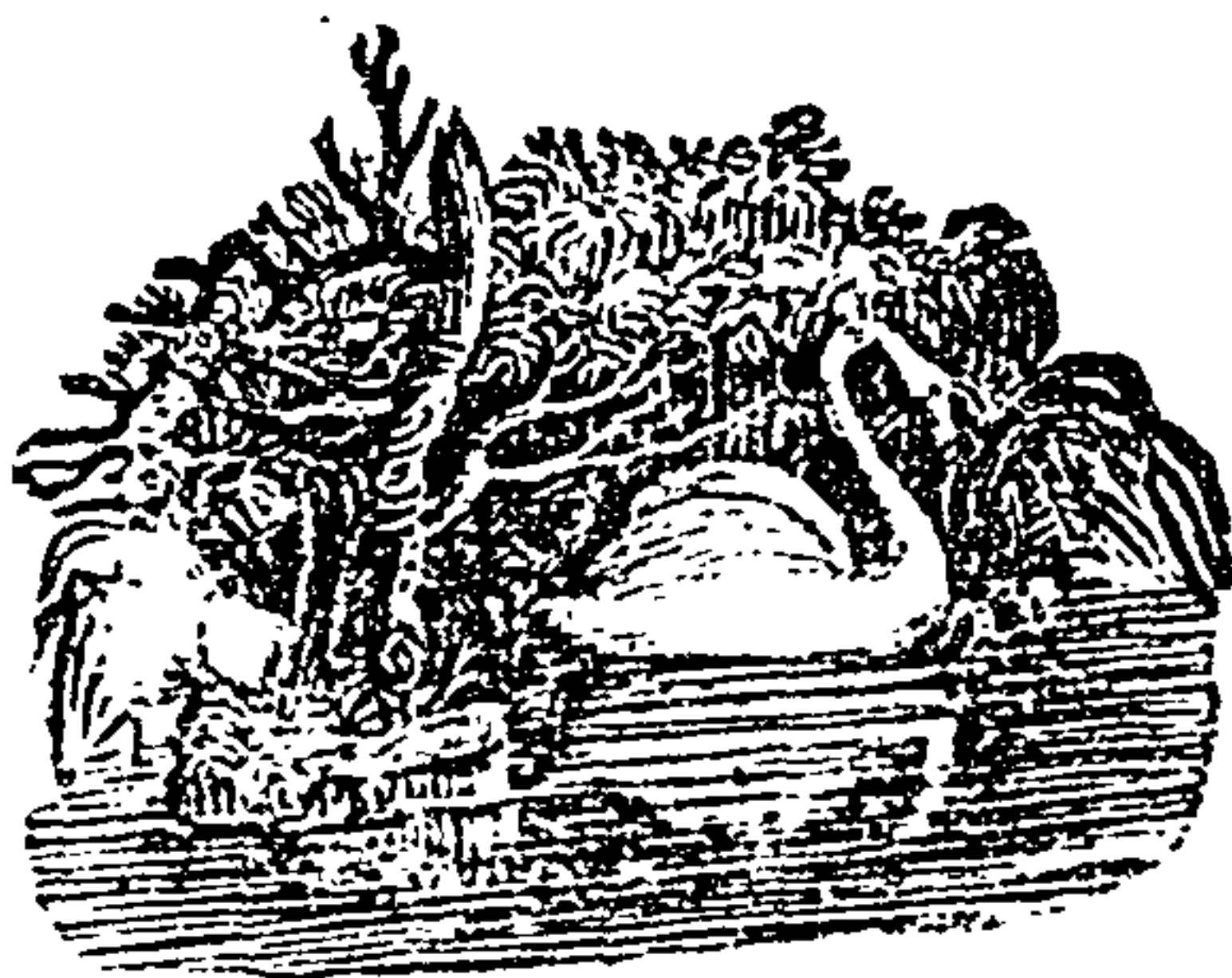


FABLE XI.

The Stork and the Crow.

A STORK and a Crow had once a strong contention, which of them stood highest in the favour of Jupiter. The Crow alledged his skill in omens, his infallibility in prophecies, and his great use to the priests of that deity in all their sacrifices and religious ceremonies. The Stork urged only his blameless life, the care he took to preserve his

offspring, and the assistance he lent his parents under the infirmities of age. It happened, as it generally does in religious disputes, that neither of them could confute the other ; so they both agreed to refer the decision to Jupiter himself. On their joint application, the god determined thus between them : Let none of my creatures despair of my regard ; I know their weakness ; I pity their errors ; and whatever is well meant, I accept as it was intended. Yet sacrifices or ceremonies are in themselves of no importance, and every attempt to penetrate the counsels of the gods is altogether as vain as it is presumptuous : but he who pays to Jupiter a just honour and reverence, who leads the most temperate life, and who does the most good in proportion to his abilities, as he best answers the end of his creation, will assuredly stand highest in the favour of his Creator.





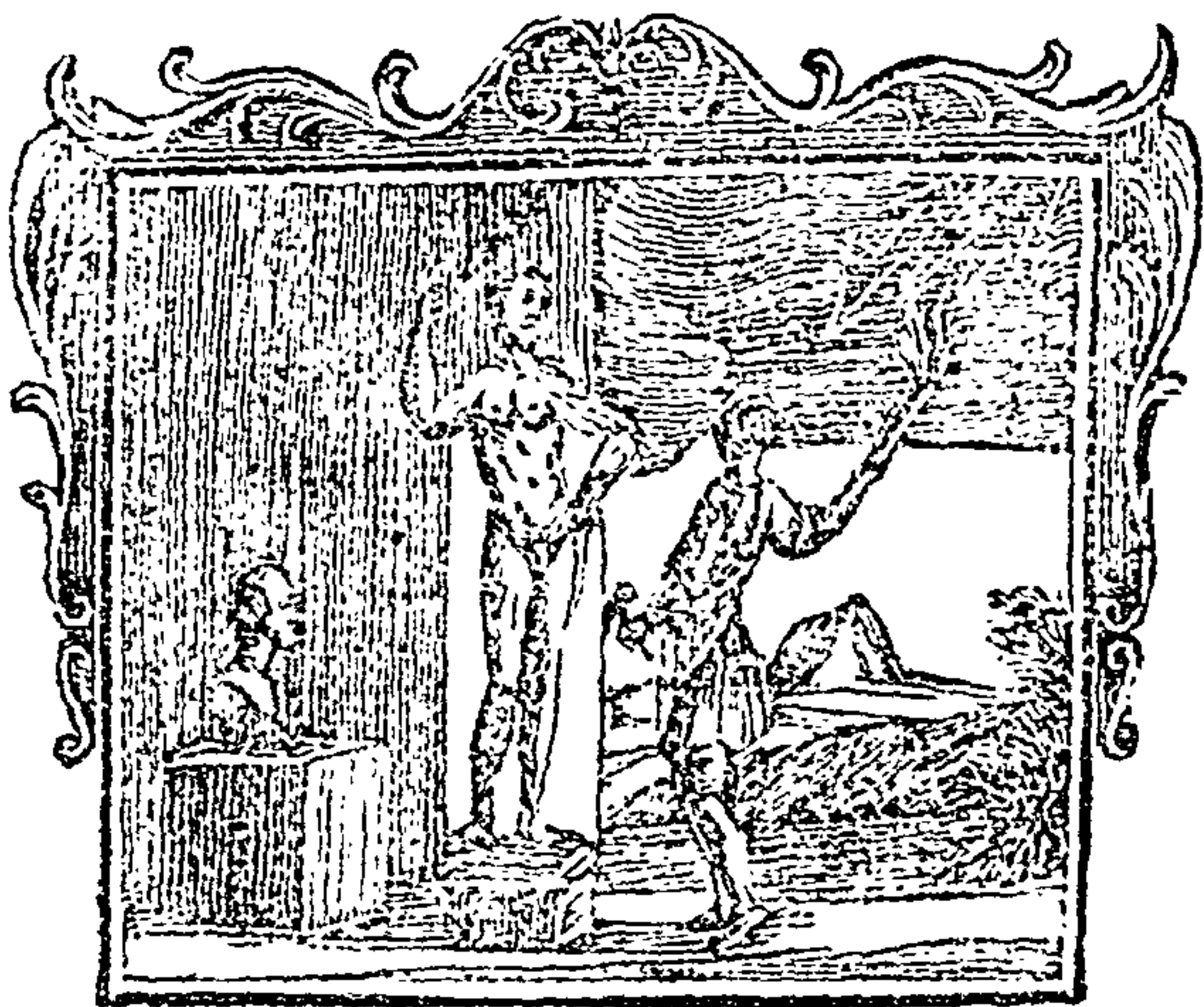
FABLE XII.

Echo and the Owl.

THE vain hear the flatteries of their own imagination, and fancy them to be the voice of fame.

A solemn Owl, puffed up with vanity, sat repeating her screams at midnight, from the hollow of a blasted oak. And whence, cried she, proceeds this awful silence, unless it be to favour my superior melody? Surely the groves are hushed in expectation of my voice, and when I sing, all nature listens. An Echo resounding from an adjacent rock, replied immediately, "All nature listens." The Nightingale, resumed she, has usurped the sovereignty by night: her note indeed is musical, but mine is sweeter far. The voice confirming her opinion, replied again, "is sweeter far." Why then am I dissident, continued she, why do I fear

to join the tuneful choir? The Echo still flattering her vanity, repeated, "join the tuneful choir." Roused by this empty phantom of encouragement, she on the morrow mingled her hootings with the harmony of the groves. But the tuneful songsters, disgusted with her noise, and affronted by her impudence, unanimously drove her from their society, and still continue to pursue her wherever she appears.



FABLE XIII.

Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS formed man of the finest clay, and animated his work with fire stolen from Heaven. He endowed him with all the faculties that are to be found amongst the animal creation: he gave him the courage of the Lion, the subtlety of the Fox, the providence of the Ant, and the in-

duslry of the Bee ; and he enabled him, by the superiority of his understanding, to subdue them all, and to make them subservient to his use and pleasure. He discovered to him the metals hidden in the bowels of the earth, and shewed him their several uses. He instructed him in every thing that might tend to cultivate and civilize human life ; he taught him to till the ground, and to implore the fertility of nature ; to build houses, to cover himself with garments, and to defend himself against the inclemencies of the air and the seasons ; to compound medicines of salutary herbs, to heal wounds, and to cure diseases ; to construct ships, to cross the seas, and to communicate to every country the riches of all. In a word, he endued him with sense and memory, with sagacity and invention, with art and science ; and to crown all, he gave him an insight into futurity. But, alas ! this latter gift, instead of improving, wholly destroyed the proper effect of all the former. Furnished with all the means and instruments of happiness, Man nevertheless was miserable : through the knowledge and dread of future evil, he was incapable of enjoying present good. Prometheus saw, and immediately resolved to remedy this inconvenience : he effectually restored Man to a capacity of happiness, by depriving him of prescience, and giving hope in its stead.



FABLE XIV.

Momus.

'TIS said that Momus was perpetually blaming and ridiculing whatever he saw. Even the works of the gods themselves could not escape his universal censure. The eyes of the Bull, he said, were so placed by Jupiter, that they could not direct his horns in pushing at his enemies. The houses which Minerva had instructed men to build, were contrived so very injudiciously, that they could not be removed from a bad neighbourhood, nor from any other inconvenience. In short, the frame of man himself was in his opinion extremely defective; having no window in his bosom that might demonstrate his sincerity, or betray his wicked purposes, and prevent their execution. These and many other faults were found in the productions of nature; but when he surveyed the works of art, there was no end of his altercations. Jupiter,

being resolved to try how far his malice would proceed, sent his daughter Venus to desire that he would give his opinion of her beauty. She appeared accordingly before the churlish god, trembling at the apprehension of his known severity. He examined her proportions with all the rigour of an envious critic. But her shape and complexion were so striking, and her smiles and graces so very engaging, that he found it impossible to give the least colour to any objection he could make. Yet to shew how hard malevolence will struggle for a cavil, as she was retiring from his presence, he begged she would acquaint her father, that whatever grace might be in her motion, yet—her slippers were too noisy.





FABLE XV.

The Butterfly, the Snail, and the Bee.

A BUTTERFLY, proudly perched on the gaudy leaves of a French marygold, was boasting the vast extent and variety of his travels. I have ranged, said he, over the graceful and majestic scenes of * Hagley, and have feasted my eyes with elegance and variety at † The Leasowes. I have wandered through regions of eglantine and honeysuckle, I have revelled in kisses on beds of violets and cowslips, and have enjoyed the delicious fragrance of roses and carnations. In short, my fancy unbounded, and my flight unrestrained, I have visited with perfect freedom all the flowers of the field or garden, and must be allowed to know the world in a superlative degree.

* Lord Lyttleton's.

† Mr. Shenstone's.

A Snail, who hung attentive to his wonders on a cabbage-leaf, was struck with admiration ; and concluded him, from all his experience, to be the wisest of animal creatures.

It happened that a Bee pursued her occupation on a neighbouring bed of marjoram, and having heard our ostentatious vagrant, reprimanded him in this manner. Vain, empty flutterer, said she, whom instruction cannot improve, nor experience itself enlighten ! 'Thou hast rambled over the world ; wherein does thy knowledge of it consist ? 'Thou hast seen variety of objects ; what conclusions hast thou drawn from them ? 'Thou hast tasted of every amusement ; hast thou extracted any thing for use ? I too am a traveller : go and look into my hive ; and let my treasures intimate to thee, that the end of travelling is to collect materials either for the use and emolument of private life, or for the advantage of the community.





FABLE XVI.

The Tuberose and the Sun-flower.

A TUBEROSE, in a bow-window on the north-side of a stately villa, addressed a Sun-flower which grew on a slope that was contiguous to the house. Pray, neighbour, says he, to what purpose do you pay all this devotion to that fictitious deity of yours, the Sun? Why are you still distorting your body, and casting up your eyes to that glaring luminary? What superstition induces you to think, that we flowers exist only through his influence? Both you and I are surely indebted to the hot-bed, and to the diligence of the gardener, for our production and support. For my part, I shall reserve my homage, together with my sweets, for that benevolent master who is continually watering and refreshing me: nor do I desire ever to see the face of that sun you so vainly idolize, while I can enjoy the cool shade of this magnificent saloon. Truce

with thy blasphemies, replied the sun-flower: why dost thou revile that glorious Being, who dispenses life and vigour, not only to us, but to every part of the creation? Without this, alas! how ineffectual were the skill and vigilance of thy boasted master, either to support thy tender frame, or even to preserve his own! But this must ever be the case with such contracted understandings: sufficient, indeed, to point out our more immediate benefactors, but disregarding the original source from which all beneficence proceeds.



FABLE XVII.

The Magpye and the Raven.

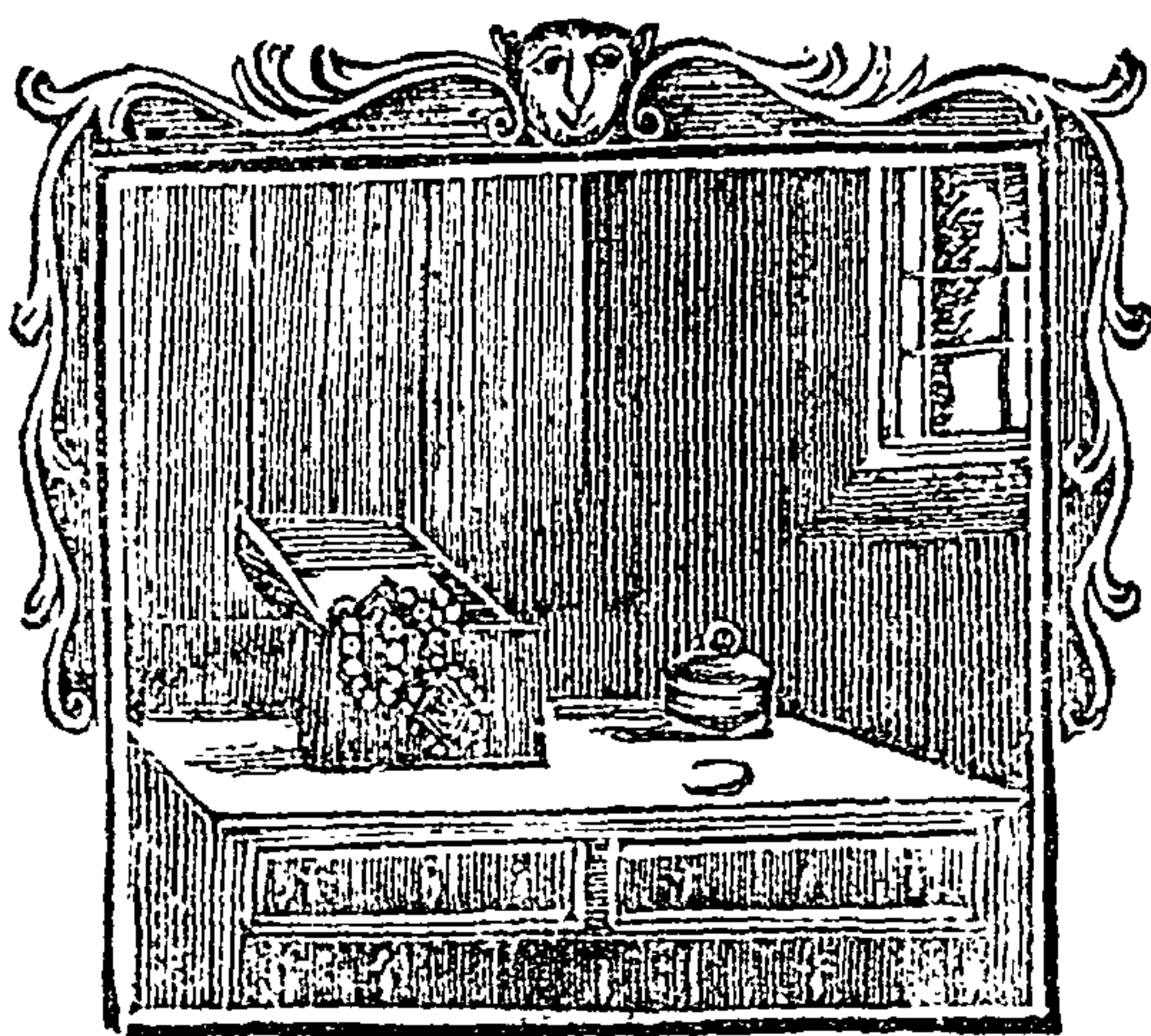
THERE was a certain Magpye, more busy and more loquacious than any of his tribe. His tongue was in perpetual motion, and himself continually upon the wing; fluttering from place to place, and very seldom appearing twice together in the same company.

Sometimes you saw him with a flock of pigeons plundering a field of new sown corn ; now perched upon a cherry-tree with a parcel of tom tits : the next moment, you would be surprised to find the same individual bird engaged with a flight of crows, and feasting upon a carcase.

He took it one day into his head to visit an old Raven, who lived retired among the branches of a venerable oak ; and there, at the foot of a lonely mountain, had past near half a century.

I admire, says the prating bird, your most romantic situation, and the wildness of these rocks and precipices around you : I am absolutely transported with the murmur of that waterfall ; methinks it diffuses a tranquillity surpassing all the joys of public life. What an agreeable sequestration from worldly bustle and impertinence ! what an opportunity of contemplating the divine beauties of nature ! I shall most certainly quit the gaieties of town, and for the sake of these rural scenes, and my good friend's conversation, pass the remainder of my days in the solitude he has chosen.

Well, sir, replies the Raven, I shall be at all times glad to receive you in my old fashioned way ; but you and I should certainly prove most unsuitable companions. Your whole ambition is to shine in company, and to recommend yourself to the world by universal complaisance ; whereas my greatest happiness consists in ease and privacy, and the select conversation of a few whom I esteem. I prefer a good heart to the most voluble tongue ; and though much obliged to you for the politeness of your professions, yet I see your benevolence divided among so numerous an acquaintance, that a very slender share of it can remain for those you are pleased to honour with the name of friends.

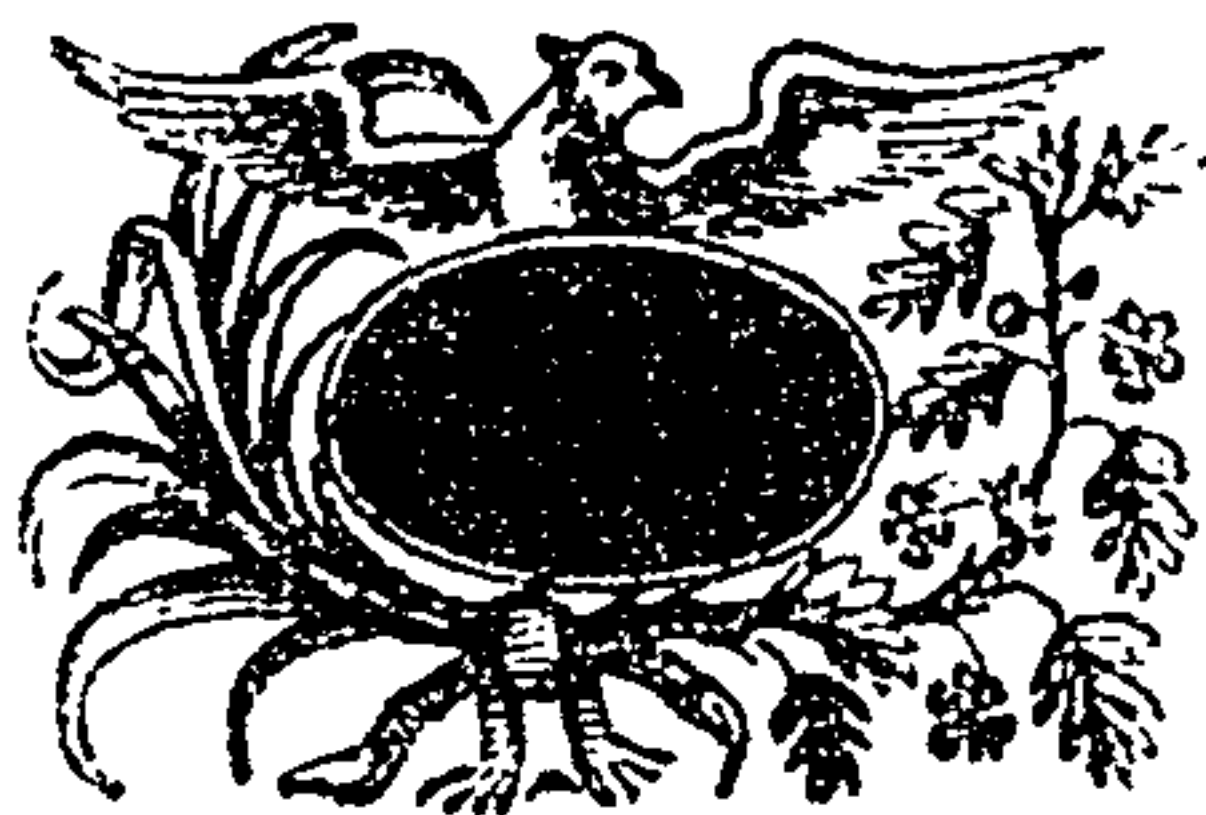


FABLE XVIII.

The Diamond and the Loadstone.

A DIAMOND of great beauty and lustre, observing not only many other gems of a lower class ranged together with him in the same cabinet, but a Loadstone likewise placed not far from him, began to question the latter how he came there ; and what pretensions he had to be ranked among the precious stones : he, who appeared to be no better than a mere flint : a sorry, coarse, rusty looking pebble ; without any the least shining quality to advance him to such an honour ; and concluded with desiring him to keep his distance, and pay a proper respect to his superiors I find, said the Loadstone, you judge by external appearances ; and it is your interest, that others should form their judgment by the same rule. I must own I have nothing to boast of in that respect ; but I may venture to say, that I make amends for my outward defects, by my in-

ward qualities. The great improvement of navigation in these latter ages is entirely owing to me. It is owing to me, that the distant parts of the world are known and accessible to each other ; that the remotest nations are connected together, and all in a manner united into one common society ; that by a mutual intercourse they relieve one another's wants, and all enjoy the several blessings peculiar to each. Great Britain is indebted to me for her wealth, her splendour, and her power ; and the arts and sciences are in a great measure obliged to me for their late improvements, and their continual increase. I am willing to allow you your due praise in its full extent ; you are a very pretty bauble ; I am mightily delighted to see you glitter and sparkle ; I look upon you with pleasure and surprise : but I must be convinced that you are of some sort of use, before I acknowledge that you have any real merit, or treat you with that respect which you seem to demand.





FABLE XIX.

The Boy and the Nettle.

A LITTLE Boy playing in the fields, chanced to be stung by a Nettle, and came crying to his father: He told him, he had been hurt by that nasty weed several times before; that he was always afraid of it; and that now he did but just touch it, as lightly as possible, when he was so severely stung. Child, says he, your touching it so gently and timorously is the very reason of its hurting you. A Nettle may be handled safely, if you do it with courage and resolution; If you seize it boldly, and gripe it fast, be assured it will never sting you: and you will meet with many sorts of persons, as well as things in the world, which ought to be treated in the very same manner.



FABLE XX.

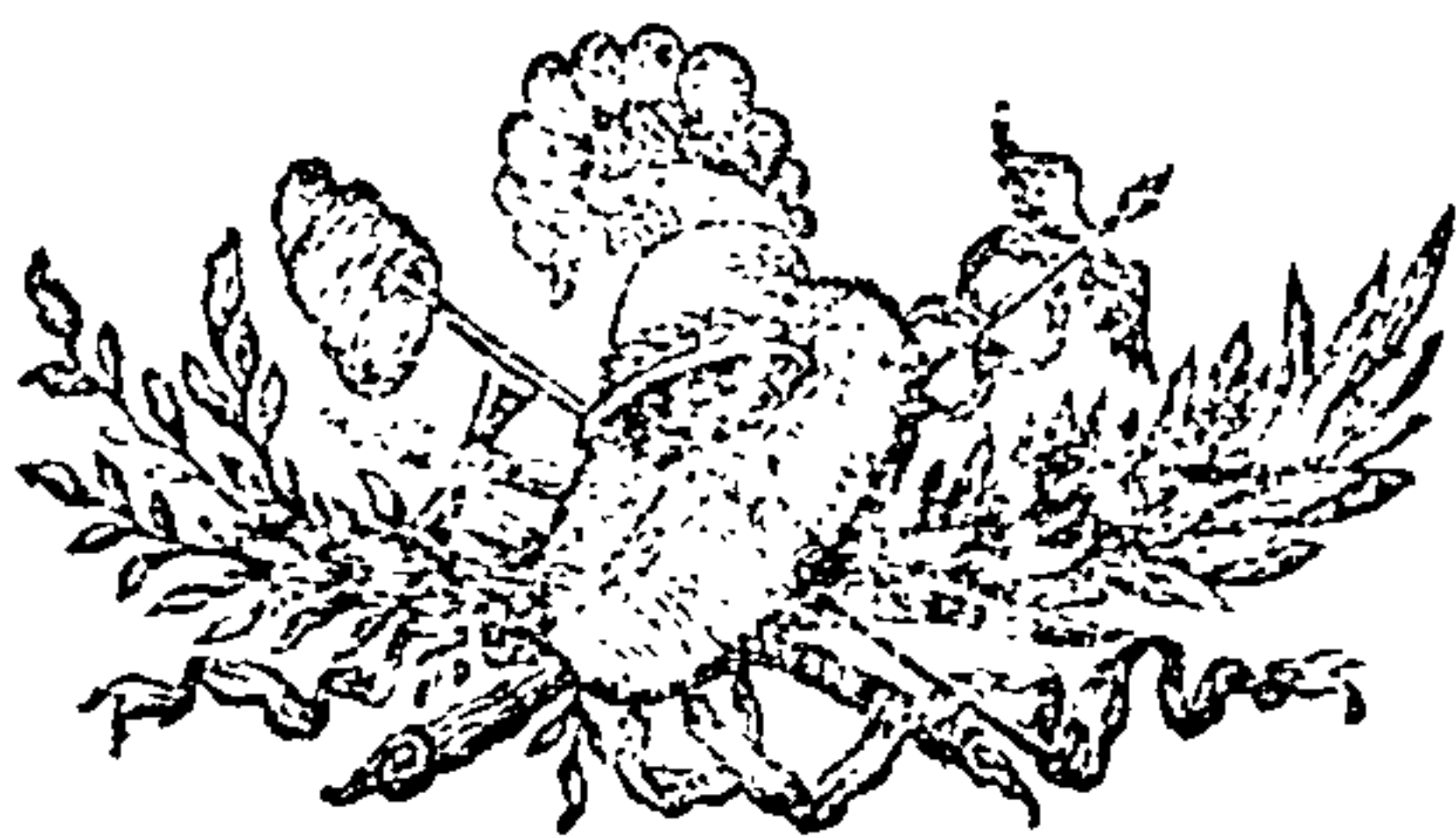
The Monster in the Sun.

A N astronomer was observing the Sun through a telescope, in order to take an exact draught of the several spots which appear upon the face of it. While he was intent upon his observations, he was on a sudden surprised with a new and astonishing appearance ; a large portion of the surface of the Sun was at once covered by a Monster of enormous size, and horrible form ; it had an immense pair of wings, a great number of legs, and a long and vast proboscis ; and that it was alive, was very apparent, from its quick and violent motions, which the observer could from time to time plainly perceive. Being sure of the fact (for how could he be mistaken in what he saw so clearly ?) our philosopher began to draw many surprising conclusions from premises so well established. He calculated the magnitude of this extraordinary

animal, and found that he covered about two square degrees of the Sun's surface ; that placed upon the earth he would spread over half one hemisphere of it ; and that he was seven or eight times as big as the moon. But what was most astonishing, was the prodigious heat that he must endure ; it was plain that he was something of the nature of the salamander, but of a far more fiery temperament ; for it was demonstrable from the clearest principles, that in his present situation he must have acquired a degree of heat two thousand times exceeding that of red-hot iron. It was a problem worth considering, whether he subsisted upon the gross vapours of the Sun, and so from time to time cleared away those spots which they are perpetually forming, and which would otherwise wholly obscure and incrustate its face ; or whether it might not feed on the solid substance of the orb itself, which, by this means, together with the constant expence of light, must soon be exhausted and consumed ; or whether he was not now and then supplied by the falling of some eccentric comet into the Sun. However this might be, he found by computation that the earth would be but short allowance for him for a few months ; and farther, it was no improbable conjecture, that as the earth was destined to be destroyed by fire, this fiery flying Monster would remove hither at the appointed time, and might much more easily and conveniently effect a conflagration, than any comet hitherto provided for that service. In the earnest pursuit of these, and many the like deep and curious speculations, the astronomer was engaged, and was preparing to communicate them to the public. In the mean time, the discovery began to be much talked of ; and all the virtuosi gathered together to see so strange a sight. They were equally convinced of the accuracy of the observa-

tion, and of the conclusions so clearly deduced from it. At last, one, more cautious than the rest, was resolved, before he gave a full assent to the report of his senses, to examine the whole process of the affair, and all the parts of the instrument; he opened the telescope, and behold! a small fly was enclosed in it, which having settled on the centre of the object glass, had given occasion to all this marvellous theory.

How often do men, through prejudice and passion, through envy and malice, fix upon the brightest and most exalted character the grossest and most improbable imputations? It behoves us upon such occasions to be upon our guard, and to suspend our judgments; the fault perhaps is not in the object, but in the mind of the observer.





FABLE XXI.

The discontented Bee.

A BEE complained to Jupiter of the numerous evils to which her condition was exposed. Her body, she said, was weak and feeble, yet was she condemned to get her living by perpetual toil; she was benumbed by the cold of winter, and relaxed by the heat of summer. Her haunts were infested with poisonous weeds, and her flights obstructed by storms and tempests. In short, what with dangers from without, and diseases from within, her life was rendered one continual scene of anxiety and wretchedness. Behold now, said Jupiter, the forwardness and folly of this unthankful race! The flowers of the field I have spread before them as a feast, and have endeavoured to regale them with an endless variety. They now revel on odoriferous beds of thyme and lavender, and now on the still more fragrant banks of violets and

roses. The business they complain of is the extraction of honey ; and, to alleviate their toil, I have allowed them wings, which readily transport them from one banquet to another. Storms, tempests, and noxious weeds, I have given them sagacity to shun ; and if they are misled, 'tis through the perverseness of their inclinations. But thus it is with Bees, and thus with Men : they misconstrue the benevolence of my designs, and then complain that my decrees are rigid : they ungratefully overlook all the advantages, and magnify all the inconveniences of their stations. But let my creatures pursue their happiness through the paths marked out by nature ; and they will then feel no pains which they have not pleasures to compensate.





FABLE XXII.

The Snipe Shooter.

AS a Sportsman ranged the fields with his gun attended by an experienced old spaniel, he happened to spring a snipe, and almost at the same instant a covey of partridges. Surprised at the accident, and divided in his aim, he let fly too indifferently, and by this means missed them both. Ah, my good master, said the spaniel, you should never have two aims at once. Had you not been dazzled and seduced by the luxurious hope of partridge, you would most probably have secured your snipe.



FABLE XXIII.

The Beggar and his Dog.

A BEGGAR and his Dog sat at the gate of a noble courtier, and were preparing to make a meal on a bowl of fragments from the kitchen-maid. A poor dependant of his lordship's, who had been sharing the singular favour of a dinner at the steward's table, was struck with the appearance, and stopped a little to observe them. The Beggar, hungry and voracious as any courtier in christendom, seized with greediness the choicest morsels, and swallowed them himself; the residue was divided into portions for his children. A scrap was thrust into one pocket for honest Jack, a crust into another for bashful Tom, and a luncheon of cheese was wrapt up with care for the little favourite of his hopeful family. In short, if any thing was thrown to the Dog, it was a bone so closely picked, that it scarcely afforded a pittance

to keep life and soul together. How exactly alike, said the dependant, is this poor Dog's case and mine ! He is watching for a dinner from a master who cannot spare it ; I for a place from a needy lord, whose wants perhaps are greater than my own : and whose relations more clamorous than any of this Beggar's brats. Shrewdly was it said by an ingenious writer, a Courtier's Dependiant is a Beggar's Dog.



FABLE XXIV.

The Sun and the Vapour.

IN the evening of a summer's day, the Sun, as he descended behind the western hills, beheld a thick and unwholesome Vapour extending itself over the whole face of the vallies. Every shrub and every flower immediately folded up its leaves, and shrunk from the touch of this detested enemy. Well hast thou chosen, said the god of day, this

the hour of my departure, to spread thy pestilential influence, and taint the beauties of the creation. Enjoy for a short space the notable triumphs of thy malignity. I shall return again with the morning, repair thy mischiefs, and put an end to thy existence. May the Slanderer in thy fate discern his own, and be warned to dread the return of Truth.



FABLE XXV.

Love and Folly.

IN the most early state of things, and among the eldest of beings, existed that God, as the poets entitle him, or rather that Dæmon, as Plato calls him, whose name is Love. He was assisting to the father of the Gods, in reducing chaos into order, in establishing the harmony of the universe, and in regulating and putting in execution the laws, by which the operations of nature are performed,

and the frame of the world subsists. Universal good seemed to be his only study, and he was the supreme delight both of gods and men. But in process of time, among other disorders that arose in the universe, it appeared that Love began to deviate very often from what had seemed till now to be his chief pursuit: he would raise frequent disturbances and confusion in the course of nature; though it was always under the pretence of maintaining order and agreement. It seems he had entered into a very intimate acquaintance with a person who had but lately made her appearance in the world. This person was Folly, the daughter of pride and ignorance. They were often together, and as often as they were, some mischief was sure to be the consequence. By degrees he introduced her into the heavens, where it was their great joy by various artifices to lead the gods into such measures as involved them in many inconveniences, and exposed them to much ridicule. They deluded them all in their turns, except Minerva, the only divinity that escaped their wiles. Even Jupiter himself was induced by them to take some steps not at all suitable to the dignity of his character. Folly had gotten the entire ascendant over her companion; however she was resolved to make still more sure of him, and engross him wholly to herself: with this design she infused a certain intoxicating juice into his nectar, the effects of which were so powerful, that in the end it utterly deprived him of his sight. Love was too much prejudiced in her favour, to apprehend her to be the cause of his misfortune; nor indeed did he seem to be in the least sensible of his condition. But his mother Venus soon found it out: and in the excess of her grief and rage carried her complaint to Jupiter, conjuring him to punish the sorcerers who had blinded her son.

Jupiter, willing to clear the heavens of such troublesome company, called both parties before him, and inquired into their conduct. After a full hearing, he determined, that Folly should make some sort of reparation for the injury done to Love : and being resolved to punish both for the many irregularities which they had lately introduced, he condemned Love to wander about the earth, and ordered Folly to be his guide.



FABLE XXVI.

The Eclipse.

ONE day when the Moon was under an Eclipse she complained thus to the Sun of the discontinuance of his favours. My dearest friend, said she, why do you not shine upon me as you used to do ? Do I not shine upon thee ? said the Sun ; I am very sure that I intend it. O no, replies the

Moon, but I now perceive the reason. I see that dirty planet, the Earth, is got between us.

The good influences of the great would perhaps be more diffusive, were it not for their mischievous dependants, who are so frequently suffered to interpose.



FABLE XXVII.

The Boy and the Butterfly.

A BOY, greatly smitten with the colours of a Butterfly, pursued it from flower to flower with indefatigable pains. First he aimed to surprise it among the leaves of a rose ; then to cover it with his hat, as it was feeding on a daisy ; now hoped to secure it, as it rested on a sprig of myrtle ; and now grew sure of his prize, perceiving it loiter on a bed of violets. But the sickle Fly, continually changing one blossom for another, still eluded his

attempts. At length, observing it half buried in the cup of a tulip, he rushed forward, and snatching it with violence, crushed it all to pieces. The dying insect, seeing the poor Boy somewhat chagrined at his disappointment, addressed him with all the calmness of a Stoic, in the following manner: — Behold now the end of thy unprofitable solicitude! and learn, for the benefit of thy future life, that all pleasure is but a painted Butterfly; which, although it may serve to amuse thee in the pursuit, if embraced with too much ardour, will perish in thy grasp.



FABLE XXVIII.

The Toad and the Ephemeron.

AS some workmen were digging marble in a mountain of Scythia, they discerned a Toad of an enormous size in the midst of a solid rock. They were very much surprised at so uncommon an appearance, and the more they considered the

circumstances of it, the more their wonder increased. It was hard to conceive by what means this creature had preserved life and received nourishment in so narrow a prison; and still more difficult to account for his birth and existence in a place so totally inaccessible to all of his species. They could conclude no other, than that he was formed together with the rock in which he had been bred, and was coeval with the mountain itself. While they were pursuing these speculations, the load fat swelling and bloating, till he was ready to burst with pride and self-importance; to which at last, he thus gave vent:—Yes, says he, you behold in me a specimen of the Antedeluvian race of animals. I was begotten before the flood; and who is there among the present upstart race of mortals, that shall dare to contend with me in nobility of birth, or dignity of character? An Ephemeron, sprung that morning from the river Hypanis, as he was flying about from place to place, chanced to be present, and observed all that passed with great attention and curiosity. Vain boaster, says he, what foundation hast thou for pride, either in thy descent, merely because it is ancient, or thy life, because it hath been long? What good qualities hast thou received from thy ancestors? Insignificant even to thyself, as well as useless to others, thou art almost as insensible as the block in which thou wast bred. Even I, that had my birth only from the scum of the neighbouring river, at the rising of this day's Sun, and who shall die at its setting, have more reason to applaud my condition, than thou hast to be proud of thine. I have enjoyed the warmth of the Sun, the light of the day, and the purity of the air; I have flown from stream to stream, from tree to tree, and from the plain to the mountain: I have provided for posterity, and

shall leave behind me a numerous offspring to people the next age of to-morrow: in short, I have fulfilled all the ends of my being, and I have been happy. My whole life, 'tis true, is but of twelve hours: but even one hour of it is to be preferred to a thousand years of mere existence; which have been spent, like thine, in sloth, ignorance, and stupidity.

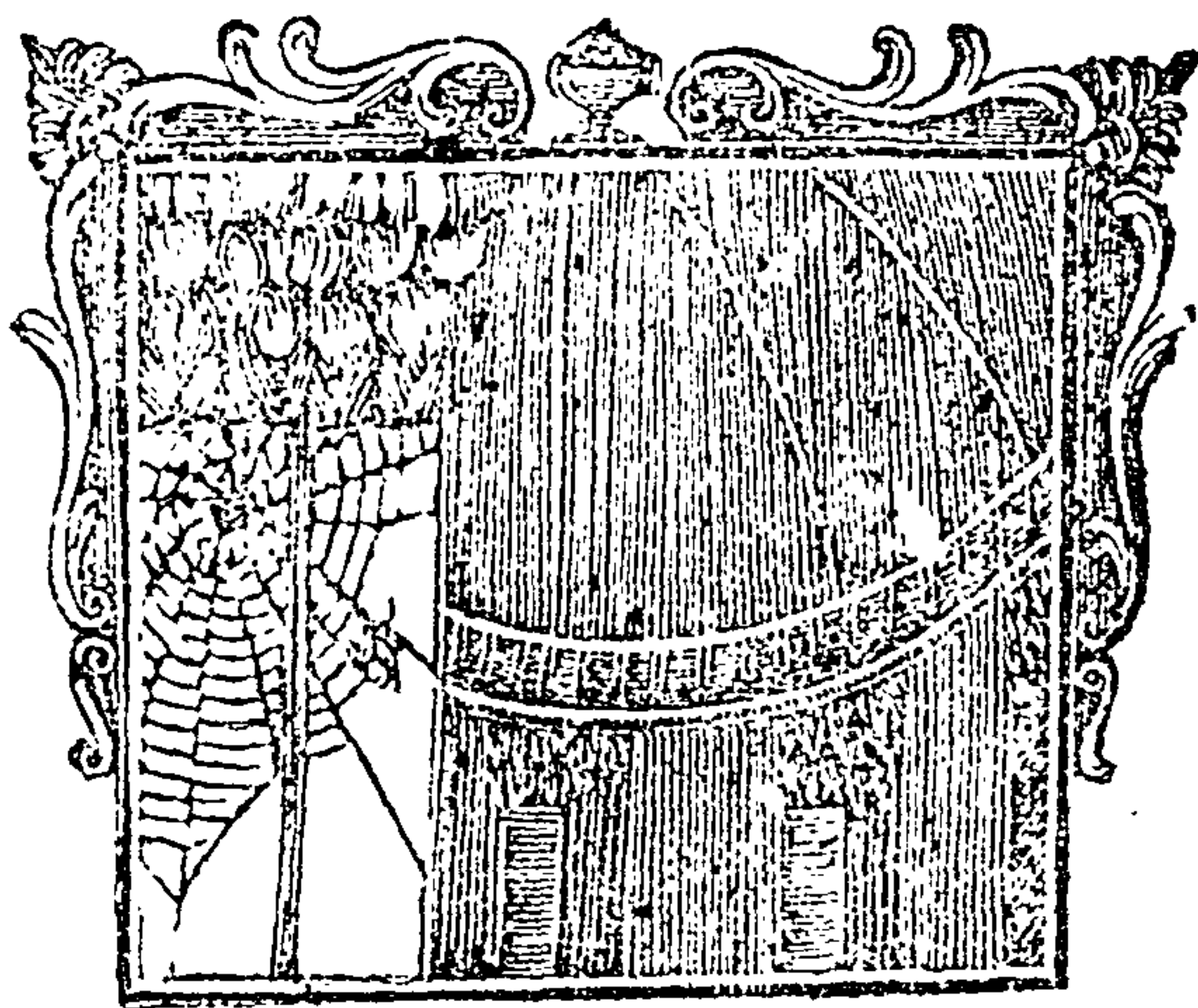


FABLE XXIX.

The Peacock.

THE Peacock, who at first was distinguished only by a crest of feathers, preferred a petition to Juno that he might be honoured also with a train. As the bird was a particular favourite, Juno readily enough assented; and his train was ordered to surpass that of every fowl in the creation. The Minion, conscious of his superb

appearance, thought it requisite to assume a proportionable dignity of gait and manners. The common poultry of the farm-yard were quite astonished at his magnificence ; and even the pheasants themselves beheld him with an eye of envy.—But when he attempted to fly, he perceived himself to have sacrificed all his activity to ostentation ; and that he was encumbered by the pomp in which he placed his glory.



FABLE XXX.

The Fly in St. Paul's Cupola.

AS a Fly was crawling leisurely up one of the columns of St. Paul's Cupola, she often stopped, surveyed, examined, and at last broke forth into the following exclamation: Strange! that any one who pretended to be an artist, should ever leave so superb a structure, with so many roughnesses unpolished! Ah, my friend, said a

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very learned architect, who hung in his web under one of the capitals, you should never decide of things beyond the extent of your capacity. This lofty building was not erected for such diminutive animals as you or I ; but for a certain sort of creatures, who are at least ten thousand times as large : to their eyes, it is very possible, these columns may seem as smooth, as to you appear the wings of your favourite mistress.



FABLE XXXI.

The Elm-tree and the Vine.

AN extravagant young Vine, vainly ambitious of independency, and fond of rambling at large, despised the alliance of a stately Elm that grew near, and courted her embraces. Having risen to some small height without any kind of support, she shot forth her flimsy branches to a very uncommon and superfluous length, calling on her neighbour to

take notice how little she wanted his assistance. Poor infatuated shrub, replied the Elm, how inconsistent is thy conduct ! Wouldst thou be truly independent, thou shouldst carefully apply those juices to the enlargement of thy stem, which thou lavishest in vain upon unnecessary foliage ; I shortly shall behold thee groveling on the ground ; yet, countenanced, indeed, by many of the human race, who, intoxicated with vanity, have despised œconomy ; and who, to support for a moment their empty boast of independance, have exhausted the very source of it in frivolous expences.



FABLE XXXII.

The Laurustinus and the Rose-tree.

IN the quarters of a shrubbery, where deciduous plants and evergreens were intermingled with an air of negligence, it happened that a Rose grew not

far from a Laurustinus. The Rose, enlivened by the breath of June, and attired in all its gorgeous blossoms, looked with much contempt on the Laurustinus, who had nothing to display but the dusky verdure of its leaves. What a wretched neighbour, cried she, is this ! and how unworthy to partake the honour of my company ! Better to bloom and die in the desert, than to associate myself here with such low and dirty vegetables. And is this my lot at last, whom every nation has agreed to honour, and every poet conspired to reverence, as the undoubted sovereign of the field and garden ? If I really am so, let my subjects at least keep their distance, and let a circle remain vacant round me, suitable to the state my rank requires. Here, gardener, bring thy hatchet ; prithee cut down this Laurustinus, or at least remove it to its proper sphere. Be pacified, my lovely Rose, replied the gardener, enjoy thy sovereignty with moderation, and thou shalt receive all the homage which thy beauty can require. But remember that in winter, when neither thou nor any of thy tribe produce one flower or leaf to cheer me, this faithful shrub, which thou despisest, will become the glory of my garden. Prudence, therefore, as well as gratitude, is concerned, in the protection of a friend, that will shew his Friendship in adversity.



FABLE XXXIII.

The Sensitive-plant and the Palm-tree.

THE Sensitive-plant being brought out of the green-house on a fine summer's day, and placed in a beautiful grove adorned with the finest forest-trees, and the most curious plants, began to give himself great airs, and to treat all that were about him with much petulance and disdain.—— Lord! says he, how could the gardener think of setting me among a parcel of trees; gross, inanimate things; mere vegetables, and perfect stocks! Sure he does not take me for a common plant, when he knows, that I have the sense of feeling in a more exquisite degree than he has himself: it really shocks me to see into what wretched low company he has introduced me: 'tis more than the delicacy of my constitution, and the extreme tenderness of my nerves, can bear. Pray, Mrs. Acacia, stand a little further off, and don't presume quite so much upon

your idle pretence of being my cousin. Good Mr. Citron, keep your distance, I beseech you; your strong scent quite overpowers me. Friend Palm-tree, your offensive shade is really more than I am able to support. The lofty Palm-tree, as he was shooting up his head with the more vigour under the weight that was hung upon it, condescended to rebuke the impertinent creature in the following manner: Thou vegetable fribble! learn to know thyself, and thy own worthlessness and insignificance. Thou valuest thyself on a vicious softness, a false delicacy, the very defect and imbecility of thy nature. What art thou good for, that shrinkest at a touch, and droopest at a breath of air; feeble and barren, a perpetual torment to thyself, and wholly useless to others? Whereas we, whom thou treatest with such disdain, make a grateful return to man for his care of us: some of us yield him fruit, others are serviceable to him by their strength and firmness; we shade him from the heat of the sun, and we defend him from the violence of the winds; I am particularly distinguished by my hardiness and perseverance, my steadiness and constancy: and on account of those very qualities which thou wantest, and affectest to despise, have the honour to be made the emblem of conquest, and the reward of the conqueror.

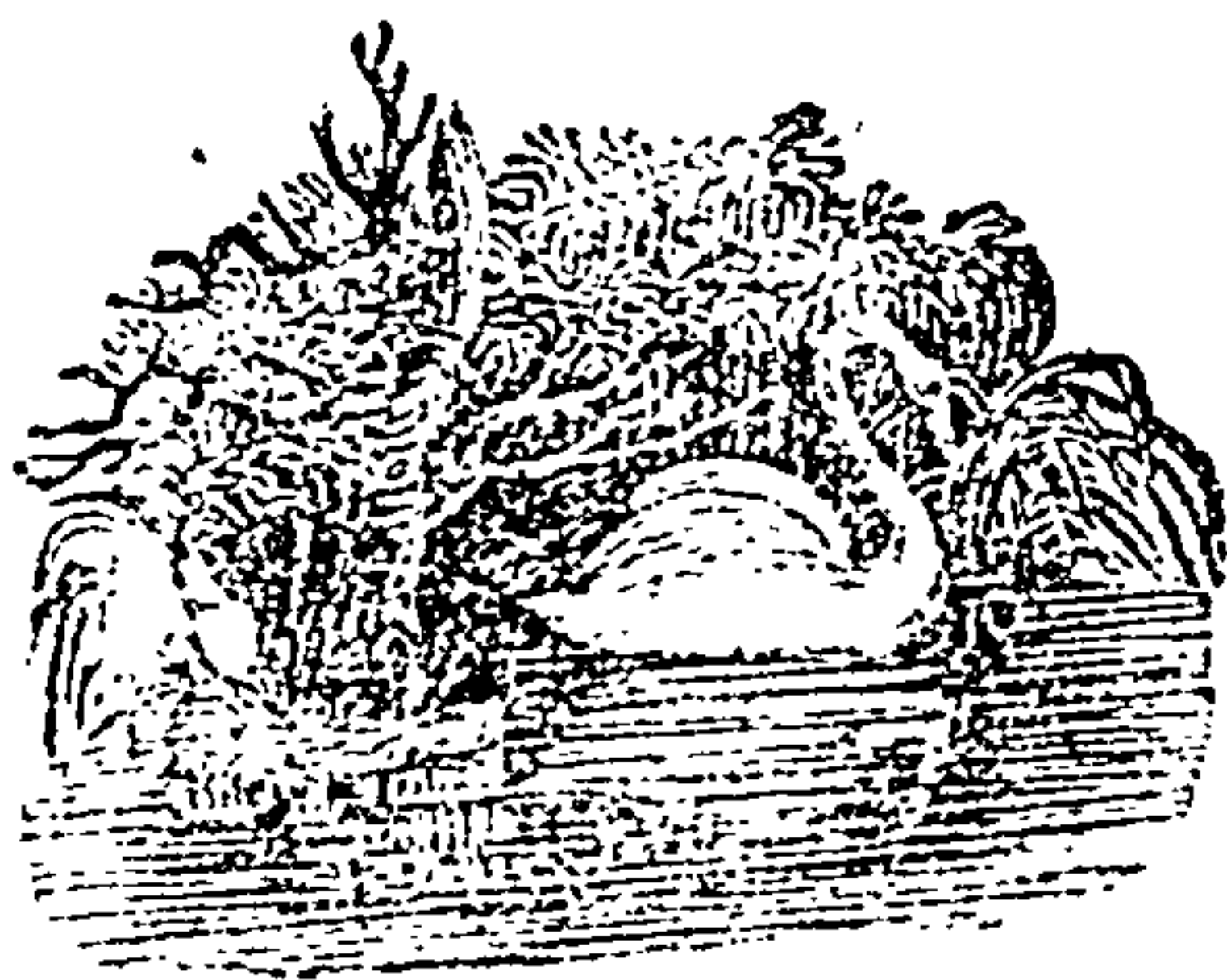


FABLE XXXIV.

The Tentyrites and the Ichneumon.

A CROCODILE of prodigious size, and uncommon fierceness, infested the banks of the Nile, and spread desolation through all the neighbouring country. He seized the shepherd, together with the sheep, and devoured the herdsman as well as the cattle. Emboldened by success, and the terror which prevailed wherever he appeared, he ventured to carry his incursions even into the island of Tentyra, and to brave the people, who boast themselves the only tamers of his race. The Tentyrites themselves were struck with horror at the appearance of a monster so much more terrible than any they had ever seen before : even the boldest of them dared not to attack him openly ; and the most experienced long endeavoured with all their art and address to surprise him, but in vain. As they were consulting together, what they should do in these circumstances,

an Ichneumon stepped forth, and thus addressed them :—I perceive your distress, neighbours ; and though I cannot assist you in the present difficulty, yet give me leave to offer you some advice that may be of use to you for the future. A little prudence is worth all your courage : it may be glorious to overcome a great evil, but the wisest way is to prevent it. You despise the crocodile while he is small and weak ; and do not sufficiently consider, that as he is a long lived animal, 't is his peculiar property to grow as long as he lives. You see I am a poor, little, feeble creature ; yet am I much more terrible to the crocodile, and more useful to the country, than you are. I attack him in the egg ; and while you are contriving for months together, how to get the better of one crocodile, and all to no purpose, I effectually destroy fifty of them in a day.





FABLE XXXV.

The Tulip and the Rose.

A TULIP and a Rose happened to be near neighbours in the same garden. They were both indeed extremely beautiful; yet the Rose engaged considerably more than an equal share of the gardener's attention. Enamoured, as in truth he was, of the delicious odour it diffused, he appeared, in the eye of the Tulip, to be always kissing and caressing it. The envy and jealousy of rival beauties are not easily to be concealed. The Tulip, vain of its external charms, and unable to bear the thought of being forsaken for another, remonstrated in these words against the gardener's partiality: Why are my beauties thus neglected? Are not my colours more bright, more various, and more inviting, than any which that red-faced thing has to display? Why then is she to engross your whole affection, and thus for ever to be preferred.—Be not dissatisfied, my

fair Tulip, said the gardener ; I acknowledge thy beauties, and admire them as they deserve. But there are found in my favourite Rose such attractive odours, such internal charms, that I enjoy a banquet in their fragrance, which no mere beauty can pretend to furnish.



FABLE XXXVI.

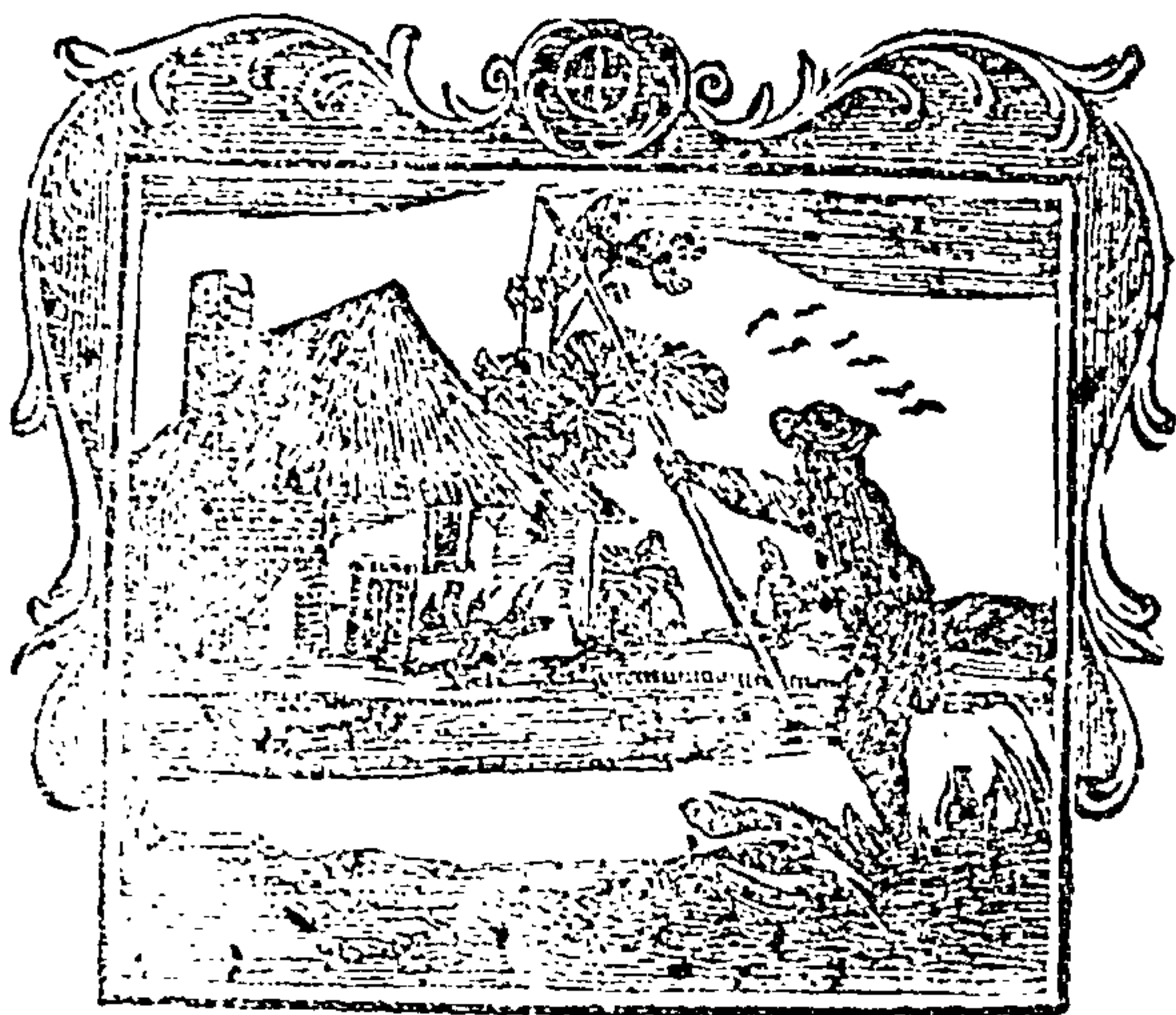
The Woodcock and the Mallard.

A WOODCOCK and a Mallard were feeding together in some marshy ground at the tail of a mill-pond. Lard, says the squeamish Woodcock, in what a voracious and beastly manner do you devour all that comes before you ! Neither snail, frog, toad, nor any kind of filth, can escape the fury of your enormous appetite. All alike goes down, without measure, and without distinction—What an odious vice is gluttony.

Good-lack ! replied the Mallard, pray how came you to be my accuser ? And whence has your excessive delicacy a right to censure my plain eating ? Is it a crime to satisfy one's hunger ? Or is it not indeed a virtue rather, to be pleased with the food which nature offers us ? Surely I would sooner be charged with gluttony, than with that finical and sickly appetite, on which you are pleased to ground your superiority of taste——What a silly vice is Daintiness !

Thus endeavouring to palliate their respective passions, our epicures parted with a mutual contempt. The Mallard halting to devour some garbage, which was in reality a bait, immediately gorged a hook through mere greediness, and oversight : while the Woodcock, flying through a glade, in order to seek his favourite juices, was entangled in a net, spread across it for that purpose ; falling each of them a sacrifice to their different, but equal, follies.

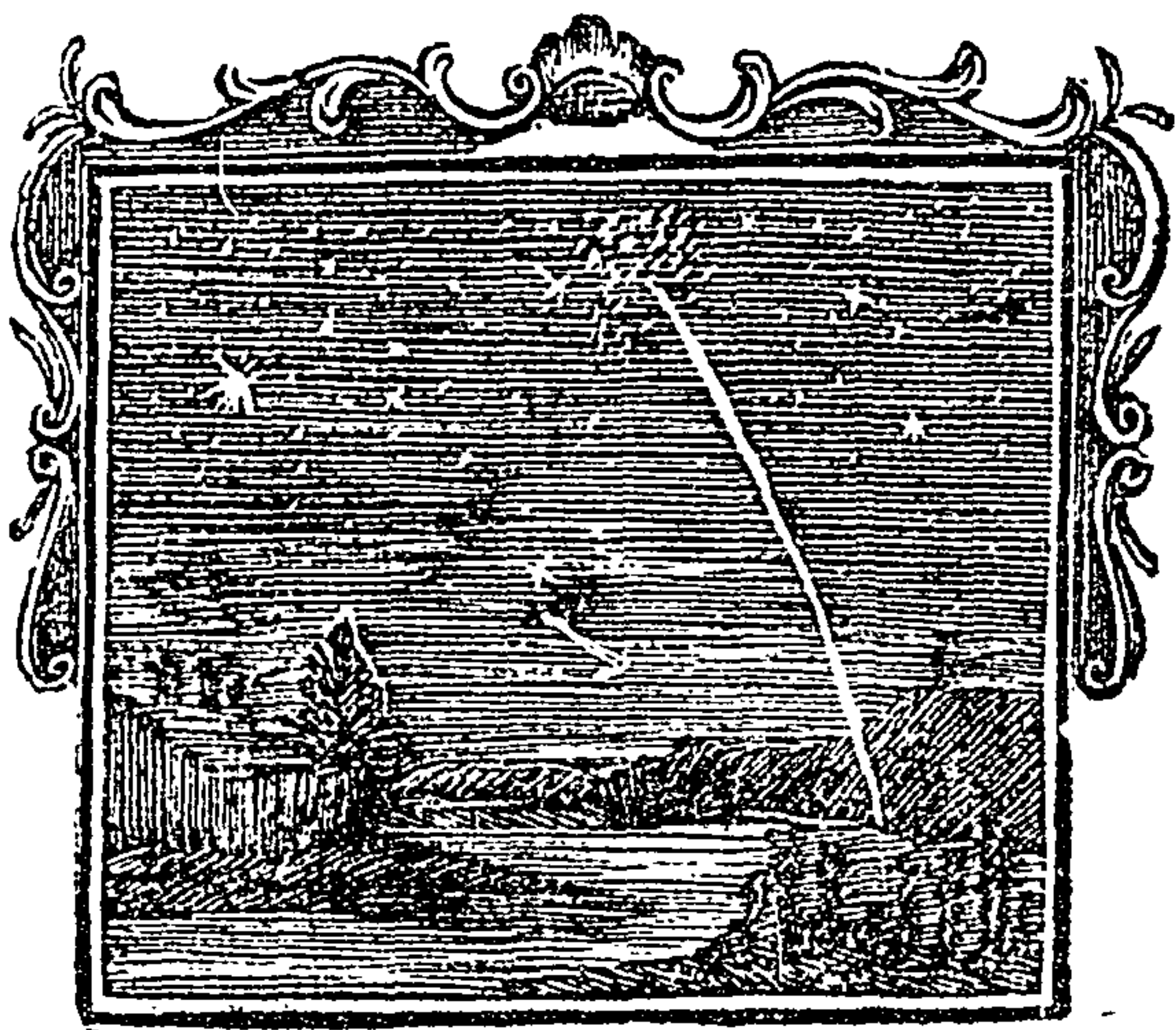




FABLE XXXVII.

The two Trouts and the Gudgeon.

A FISHERMAN, in the month of May, stood angling on the banks of the Thames with an artificial fly: He threw his bait with so much art, that a young Trout was rushing towards it, when she was prevented by her mother. Never, said she, my child, be too precipitate, where there is a possibility of danger. Take due time to consider, before you risk an action that may be fatal. How know you whether your appearance be indeed a fly, or the snare of an enemy? Let some one else make the experiment before you. If it be a fly, he very probably will elude the first attack: and the second may be made, if not with success, at least with safety.—She had no sooner uttered this caution, than a Gudgeon seized upon the pretended fly, and became an example to the giddy daughter, of the great importance of her mother's counsel.



FABLE XXXVIII.

The Stars and the Sky-rocket.

AS a Rocket, on a rejoicing night, ascended through the air, and observed the stream of light that distinguished its passage, he could not forbear exulting in his elevation, and calling upon the Stars to do him reverence. Behold, said he, what gazing multitudes admire the lustre of my train, whilst all your feeble sparks of light pass unobserved, or disregarded ! The Stars heard his empty boast with a silent indignation : the Dog-Star only vouchsafed to answer him. How weak are they, said he, who value themselves on the voice of popular applause ! 'Tis true, the novelty of thy appearance may procure to thee more admiration from vulgar minds than our daily splendors can attract, although indeed a lasting miracle. But do not estimate thy importance by the capricious fancy of ill-judging mortals. Know

thyself to be but the gaudy pageant of a few moments, the transient gaze of a giddy and ignorant multitude. Even while I speak, thy blaze is half extinguished, and thou art at this instant sinking into perpetual oblivion. Whereas our fires were lighted up by Heaven for the admiration and advantage of the universe; and our glory shall endure for ever.



FABLE XXXIX.

The Farmer and his three Enemies.

A WOLF, a Fox, and a Hare, happened one evening to be foraging in different parts of a Farmer's yard. Their first effort was pretty successful, and they returned in safety to their several quarters: however, not so happy as to be unperceived by the Farmer's watchful eye: who placing several kinds of snares, made each his prisoner in the next attempt. He first took the Hare to task, who

confessed she had eaten a few turnip tops, merely to satisfy her hunger : besought him piteously to spare her life, and promised never to enter his grounds again. He then accosted the Fox, who in a fawning obsequious tone, protested that he came into his premises through no other motive than pure goodwill, to restrain the Hares, and other vermin, from the plunder of his corn ; and that, whatever evil tongues might say he had too great a regard both for him and for justice to be in the least capable of any dishonest action. He last of all examined the Wolf what business brought him within the purview of a Farmer's yard ? The Wolf very impudently declared, it was with a view of destroying his lambs, to which he had an undoubted right : that the Farmer himself was the only felon, who robbed the community of Wolves of what was meant to be their proper food. That this, at least, was his opinion ; and whatever fate attended him, he should not scruple to risque his life in the pursuit of his lawful prey.

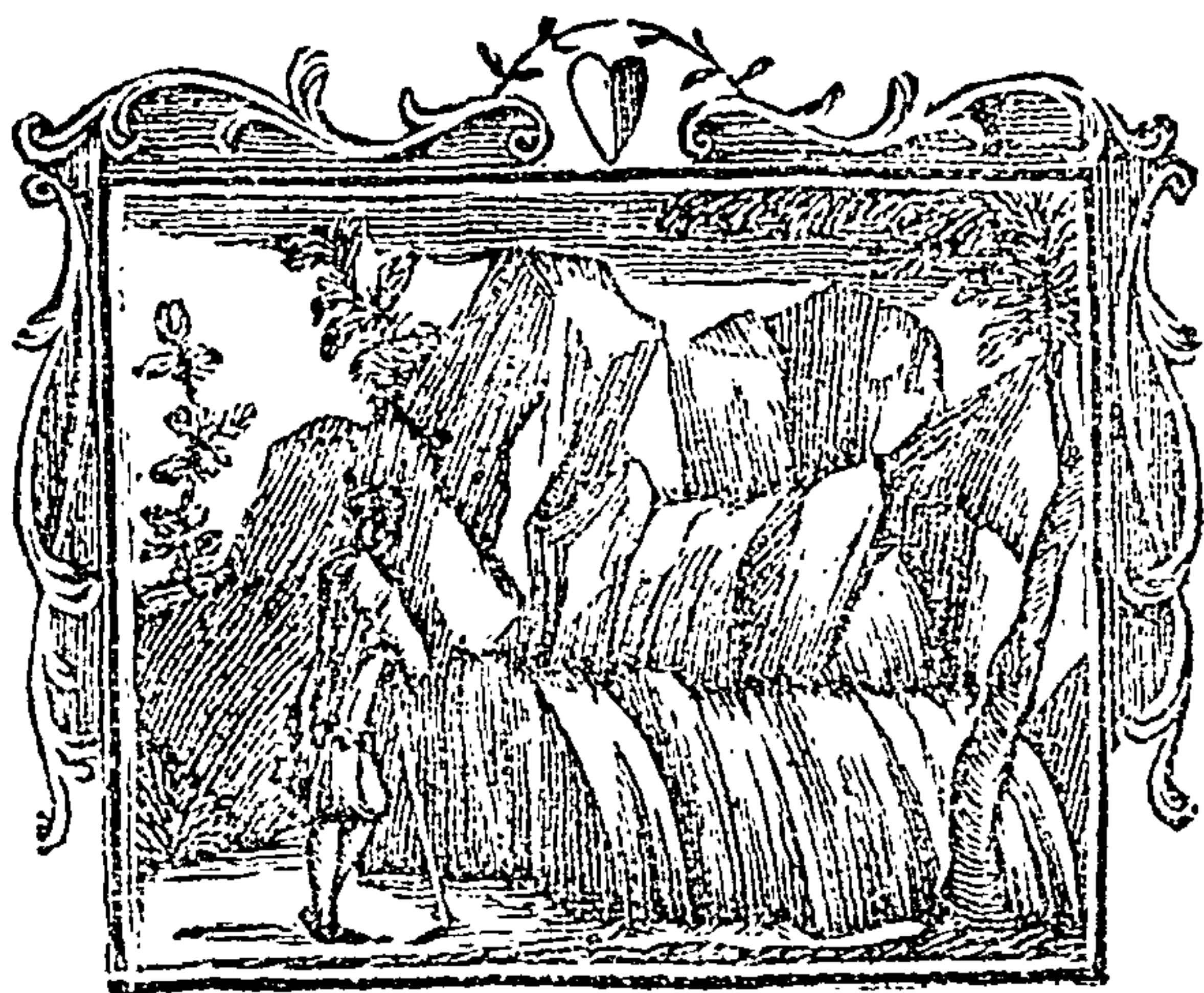
The Farmer having heard their pleas, determined the cause in the following manner : The Hare, said he, deserves compassion, for the penitence she shews, and the humble confession she has made :— As for the Fox and Wolf, let them be hanged together ; criminals alike with respect to the fact, they have alike heightened their equal guilt by the aggravations of hypocrisy and of impudence.



FABLE XL.

'The Snail and the Statue.

A STATUE of the Medicean Venus was erected in a grove sacred to beauty and the fine arts. Its modest attitude, its elegant proportions, assisted by the situation in which it was placed, attracted the regard of every delicate observer.—A Snail, who had fixed himself beneath the moulding of a pedestal, beheld with an evil eye the admiration it excited. Accordingly, watching his opportunity, he strove, by trailing his filthy slime over every limb and feature, to obliterate those beauties which he could not endure to hear so much applauded. An honest linnet, however, who observed him at his dirty work, took the freedom to assure him, that he would infallibly lose his labour; for, although, said he, to an injudicious eye, thou mayest fully the perfections of this finished piece, yet a more accurate and close inspector will discover its beauty, through all the blemishes with which thou hast endeavoured to disguise it.



FABLE XLI.

The Waterfall.

FROM the head of a narrow valley that is wholly overshaded by the growth of trees, a large Cascade bursts forth with a luxuriance unexpected. First the current rushed down a precipice with headlong impetuosity ; then dashed from rock to rock, and divided as it rolls along by fragments of stone or trunks of trees, it assumes a milk-white appearance, and sparkles through the gloom. All is intricacy ; all is profusion : and the tide, however ample, appears yet more considerable by the fantastic growth of roots that hide the limits of its channel. Thus bounding down from one descent to another, it no sooner gains the level than it sinks beneath the earth, and buries all its glory at our feet.

A spectator, privy to the scanty source which furnished out this grand appearance, stood one day in

a musing posture, and began to moralize on its prodigality. Ah ! silly stream, said he, why wilt thou hasten to exhaust thy source, and thus wilfully incur the contempt that waits on poverty ? Art thou ignorant that thy funds are by no means equal to this expence ? Fear not, my kind adviser, replied the generous Cascade ; the gratitude I owe my master, who collected my rills into a stream, induces me to entertain his friends in the best manner I am able ; when alone, I act with more economy.



FABLE XLII.

The Oak and the Sycamore.

A SYCAMORE grew beside an Oak ; and being not a little elevated by the first warm days in spring, began to shoot forth his leaves apace, and to despise the naked Oak for insensibility and want of spirit. The Oak, conscious of his superior nature,

made this philosophical reply : Be not, my friend, so much delighted with the first precarious address of every fickle zephyr : consider, the frosts may yet return : and if thou covetest an equal share with me in all the glories of the rising year, do not afford them an opportunity to nip thy beauties in their bud. As for myself, I only wait to see this genial warmth a little confirmed : and, whenever that is the case, I shall perhaps display a majesty that will not easily be shaken. But the tree which appears too forward to exult in the first favourable glance of spring, will ever be the readiest to droop beneath the frowns of winter.



FABLE XLIII.

The Wolf and the Shepherd's Dog.

A WOLF ranging over the forest, came within the borders of a sheep-walk ; when meeting with a Shepherd's Dog, that with a surly sort of a

growl, demanded his business there, he thought proper to put on as innocent an appearance as he could, and protested upon his honour that he meant not the least offence. I am afraid, said the Dog, the pledge of your honour is but a poor deposit for your honesty : you must not take it amiss, if I object to the security. No slur upon my reputation, replied the Wolf, I beg of you. My sense of honour is as delicate, as my great achievements are renowned. I would not leave a stain upon my memory for the world. The fame of what are commonly called great achievements is very precious, to be sure, returned the Dog ; almost equal to the character of an excellent butcher, a gallant highwayman, or an expert assassin. While the Dog was yet speaking, a lamb happened to stray within reach of our hero. The temptation was stronger than he was able to resist : he sprung upon his prey, and was tearing hastily away with it. However, the Dog seized and held him, till the arrival of the shepherd, who took measures for his execution. Just as he was going to dispatch him, I observe, says the Dog, that one of your noble achievements is the destruction of the innocent. You are welcome to the renown, as you are also to the reward of it. As for me, I shall prefer the credit of having honestly defended my master's property, to any fame you have acquired by thus heroically invading it.



FABLE XLIV.

The Mushroom and the Acorn.

AN Acorn fell from the top of an old venerable oak, full on the head of a Mushroom that unhappily sprung up beneath it. Wounded by the blow, the Mushroom complained of the incivility. Impertinent upstart, replied the Acorn, why didst thou, with familiar boldness, approach so near to thy superiors? Shall the wretched offspring of a dunghill presume to raise its head on a spot ennobled by my ancestors for so many generations? I do not mean, returned the Mushroom, to dispute the honour of thy birth, or to put my own in competition with it; on the contrary, I must acknowledge that I hardly know from whence I sprung. But sure, 'tis merit, and not mere ancestry, that obtains the regard of those whose approbation is truly valuable: I have little perhaps to boast; but surely thou, who hast thus insulted me, canst have no pretence

to boast any. I please the palates of mankind, and give a poignant flavour to their most elegant entertainments; while thou, with all the pride of thy ancestry, art fit only to fatten hogs.



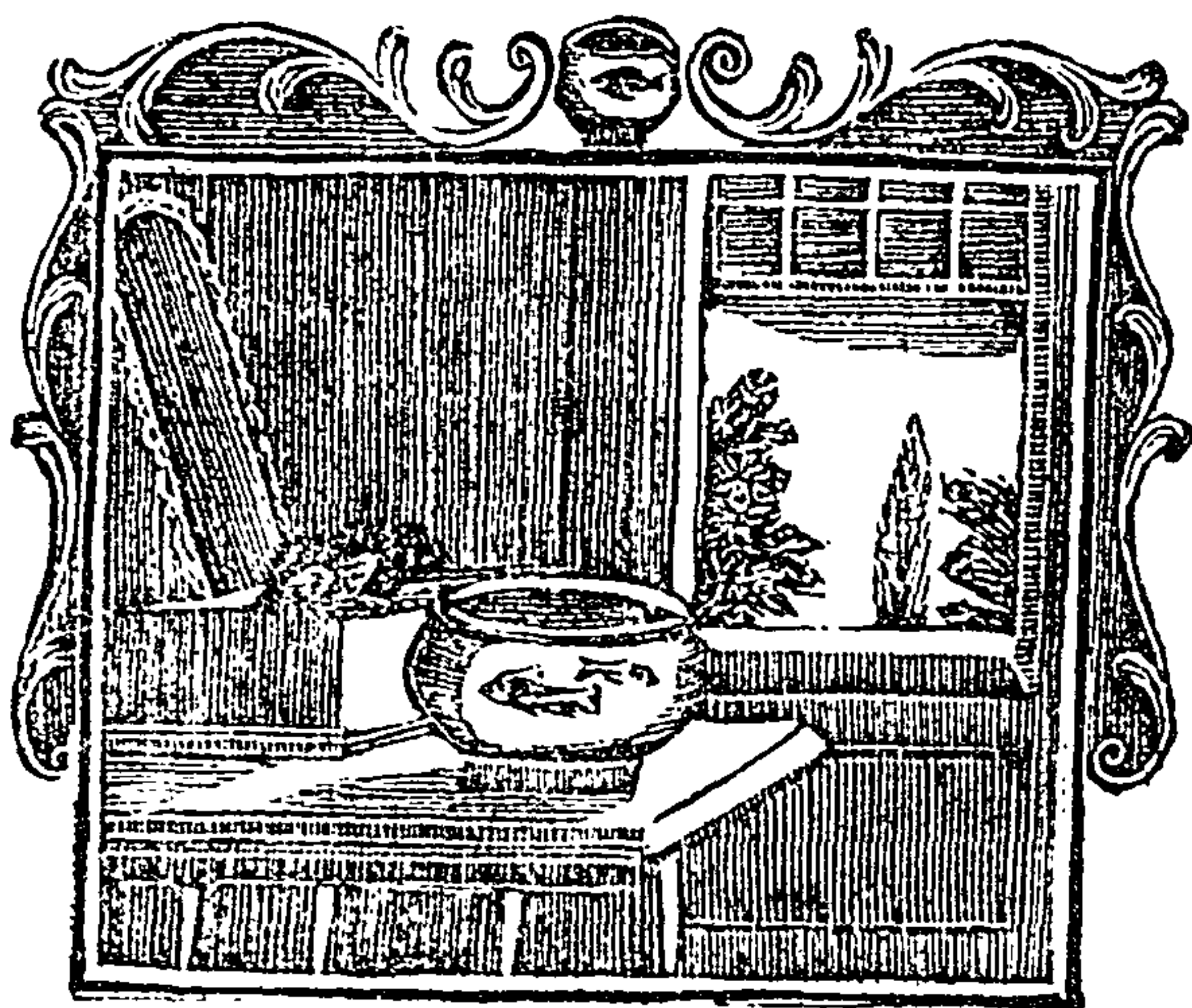
FABLE XLV.

Wisdom and Cunning.

AS Wisdom, in the form of a beautiful young lady was travelling along the road, it happened that she was benighted, and lost her way. She had not however wandered far, when perceiving a light glimmer from a window at some distance, she endeavoured to direct her steps towards the house where it appeared. This proved to be no other than the miserable abode of selfishness; who beneath the semblance of a churlish and close-fisted peasant had long taken up his residence in this lonesome habitation. She knocked at the door to in-

quire her way. The Lout opened it with caution ; but being immediately struck with the uncommon lustre of so fine a figure, he found his appetite awake, and became impatient for the gratification of it. Wisdom, on the other hand, feeling an utter detestation of him, would have willingly withdrawn herself ; but alas ! it was too late. He took advantage of her distress, seized, and forced her to his bed. Nine months afterwards she was delivered of a squint-eyed, fallow-faced imp, unto whom she could never be induced to shew any marks of natural affection. She would not even own him for her proper offspring ; and he was put into the hands of Dullness, to be nursed and educated at her discretion. As he arrived to years of maturity, he was known by the name of Cunning. Some faint resemblance which he bore of his mother, procured him a degree of respect among persons of small discernment ; and he showed somewhat of her address in regard to the means by which he gained his ends ; but he had so much of the Father, as never to extend his aims to any truly noble or social achievement.





FABLE XLVI.

The Toad and the Gold-fish.

AS a Gold-fish, newly brought from the warm regions of the east, displayed his beauties in the sun; a Toad, who had long eyed him with no small degree of envy, broke out into this exclamation: How partial and how fantastic is the favour of mankind! regardless of every excellence that is obvious and familiar; and only struck with what is imported from a distant climate at a large expence! What a pompous basin is here constructed, and what extreme fondness is here shown for this insignificant stranger? While a quadrupede of my importance is neglected, shunned, and even persecuted. Surely, were I to appear in China, I should receive the same, or perhaps greater, honours than are lavished here upon this tinsel favourite.

The Gold-fish, conscious of his real beauty, and somewhat angry to be thus insulted by so very un-

ightly and deformed a creature, made this rational reply. It must be confessed, that the opinions of men are sometimes guided by the caprice you mention. Yet as for me and the rest of my tribe, it is well known that if we are admired in England, we are not less admired at home : being there esteemed by the greatest mandarins, fed by stated officers, and lodged in basons as superb as any your nation has to boast. Perhaps then, notwithstanding your sage remark, there are some virtues and some qualities that please and disgust almost universally ; and as innocence, joined to beauty, seldom fails to procure esteem, so malice, added to deformity, will cause a general detestation.





FABLE XLVII.

The Hermit.

A CERTAIN Hermit had scooped his cave near the summit of a lofty mountain, from whence he had an opportunity of surveying a large extent both of sea and land. He sat one evening, contemplating with pleasure on the various objects that lay diffused before him. The woods were dressed in the brightest verdure; the thickets adorned with the gayest blossoms. The birds caroled beneath the branches; the lambs frolicked around the meads; the peasant whistled beside his team; and the ships, driven by gentle gales, were returning safely into their proper harbours. In short, the arrival of spring had doubly enlivened the whole scene before his eye; and every object yielded a display either of beauty or of happiness.

On a sudden arose a violent storm. The winds mustered all their fury, and whole forests of oak lay scattered on the ground. Darkness instantly succeeded; hail-stones and rain were poured forth in cataracts, and lightning and thunder added horror to the gloom.

And now the sea, piled up in mountains, bore aloft the largest vessels, while the horrid uproar of its waves drowned the shrieks of the wretched mariners. When the whole tempest had exhausted its fury, it was instantly followed by the shock of an earthquake.

The poor inhabitants of a neighbouring village flocked in crowds to our Hermit's cave; religiously hoping, that his well known sanctity would protect them in their distress. They were, however, not a little surprised at the profound tranquillity that appeared in his countenance. My friends, said he, be not dismayed. Terrible to me as well as to you, would have been the war of elements we have just beheld; but that I have meditated with so much attention on the various works of Providence, as to be persuaded that his goodness is equal to his power.





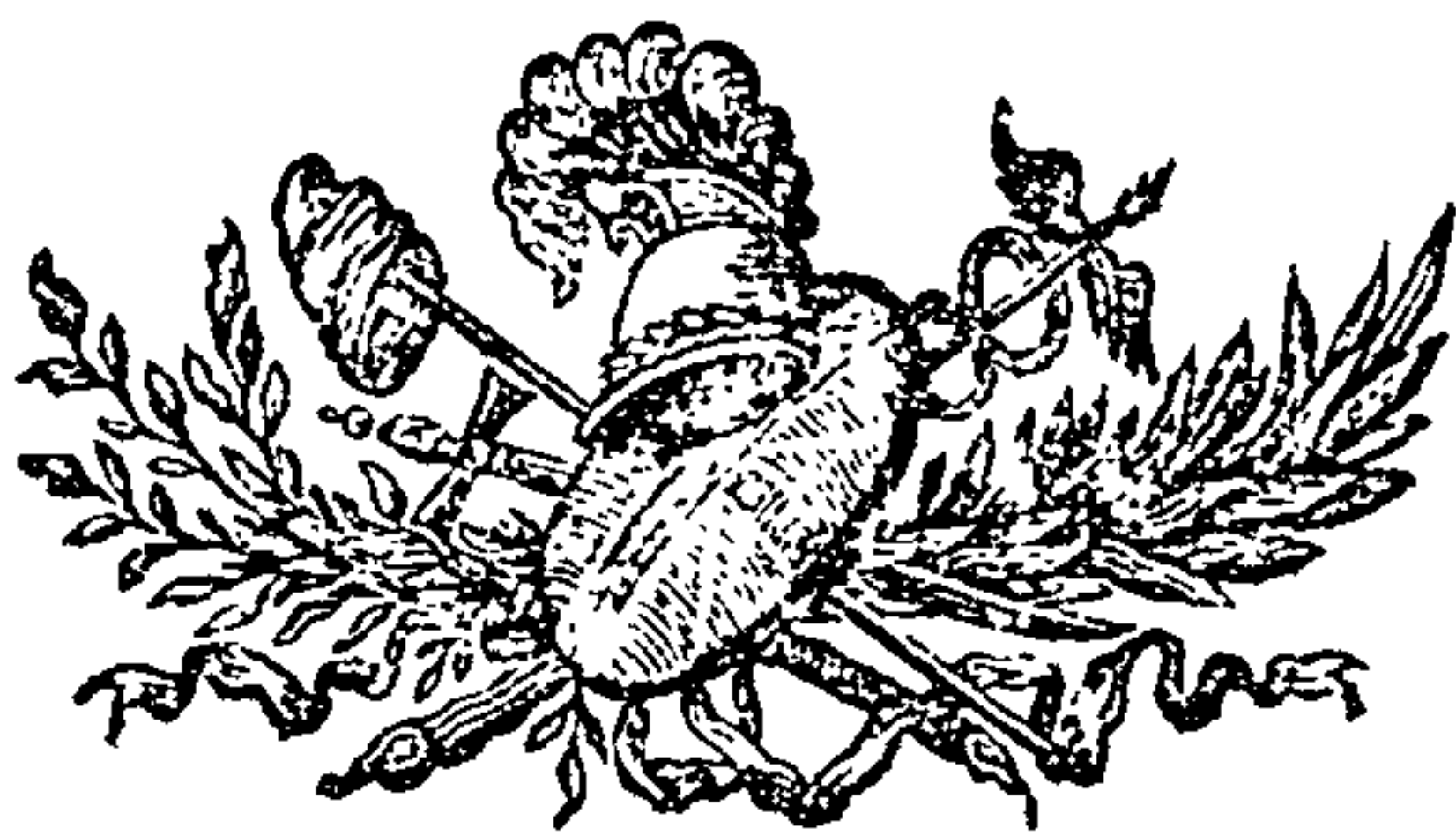
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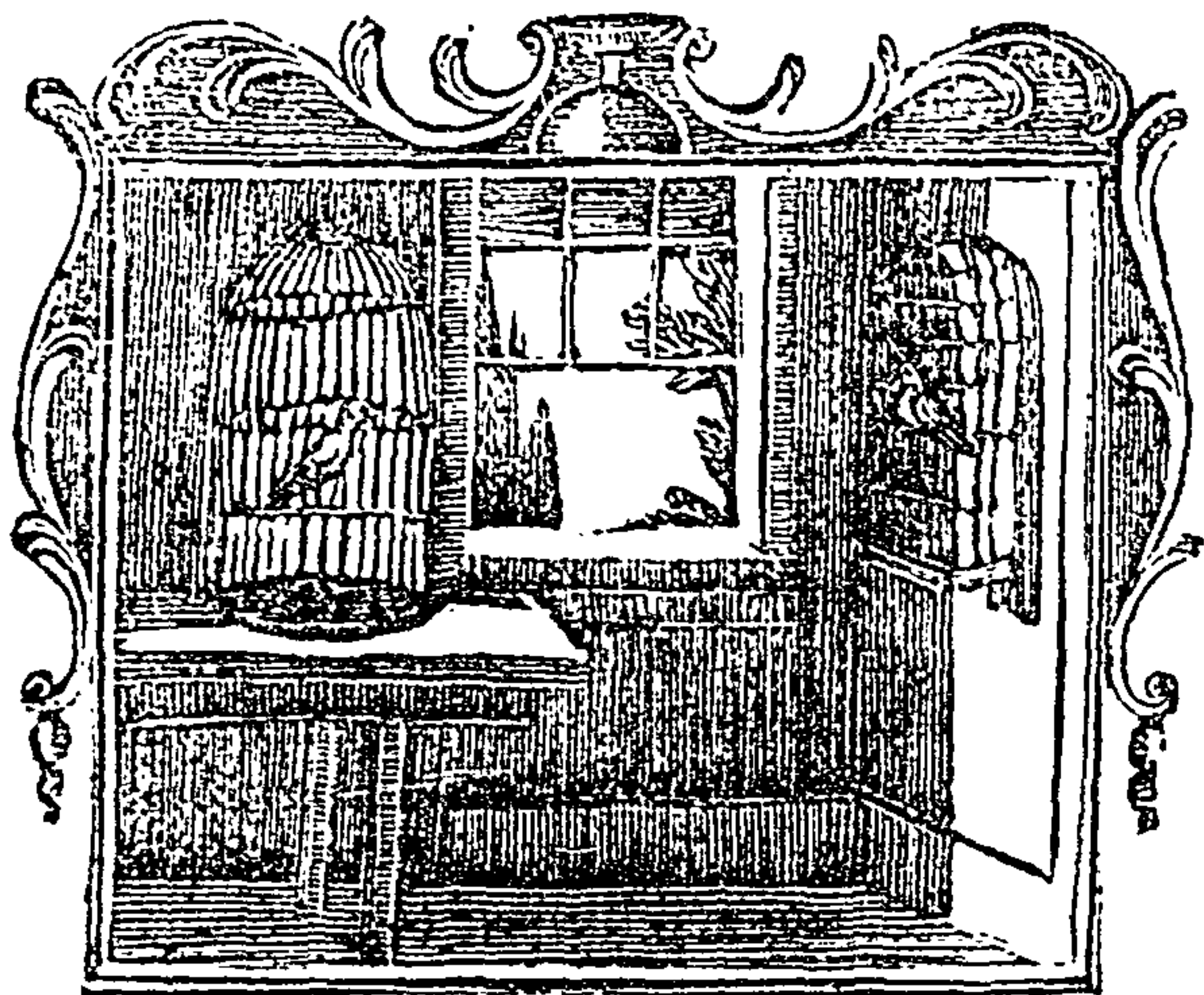
The Dove.

A DOVE that had a mate and young ones, happening to spy her cage door open, was driven by a sudden impulse to fly out into an adjacent grove. There, perched upon the bough of a sycamore, she sat as it were wrapt in deep contemplation; not recovering from her reverie, until the owner drew nigh unseen, and brought her back to her little family.

Art thou not ashamed then, says her mate, thus to desert thy helpless offspring? Art thou not base to abandon me, for the company of birds to whom thou art a stranger? Could I have harboured such a thought? I, who have been ever constant to our first engagement, and must have died of mere despair, hadst thou not returned to my embraces? But how, alas! returned! Not, as it seems, by choice; but ensnared by dint of artifice, and brought hither by constraint.

Have patience, replied the rambler, and hear the plea of thy repentant mate. Witness all ye powers of wedlock, ye that know what passes in the hearts of Doves, if ever, before this unhappy moment, I felt a wish to part from thee ! The door, so seldom open, allowed but one moment for deliberation, and I happened to decide amiss. When removed to yonder wood, the air of liberty breathed so sweet, that, with horror I speak it, I felt a suspense about returning to the cage. Pardon, I pray thee, this one crime, and be well assured I will never repeat it. And that thou may'st be the more induced to pardon me, know, that the love of liberty burns ever the strongest in the bosoms that are most open to conjugal affection, and the love of their young.





FABLE XLIX.

The Nightingale and the Bullfinch.

A NIGHTINGALE and a Bullfinch occupied two cages in the same apartment. The Nightingale perpetually varied her song, and every effort she made afforded fresh entertainment. The Bullfinch always whistled the same dull tune that he had learnt, till all the family grew weary of the disgusting repetition. What is the reason, said the Bullfinch one day to his neighbour, that your songs are always heard with peculiar attention, while mine, I observe, are almost as wholly disregarded? The reason, replied the Nightingale, is obvious; your audience are sufficiently acquainted with every note you have been taught, and they know your natural abilities too well to expect any thing new from that quarter. How then can you suppose they will listen to a songster, from whom nothing native or original is to be expected?



FABLE L.

The Fighting Cocks and the Turkey.

TWO Cocks of the genuine game breed met by chance upon the confines of their respective walks. To such great and heroic souls the smallest matter imaginable affords occasion for dispute. They approach each other with pride and indignation; they look defiance; they crow a challenge; and immediately commences a long and bloody battle. It was fought on both sides with so much courage and dexterity; they gave and received such deep and desperate wounds; that they both lay down upon the turf utterly spent, blinded, and disabled. While this was their situation, a Turkey, that had been a spectator of all that passed between

them, drew near to the field of battle, and reproved them in this manner: How foolish and absurd has been your quarrel, my good neighbours! A more ridiculous one could scarce have happened among the most contentious of all creatures, Men. Because you have crowed perhaps in each other's hearing, or one of you has picked up a grain of corn upon the territories of his rival, you have both rendered yourselves miserable for the remainder of your days.



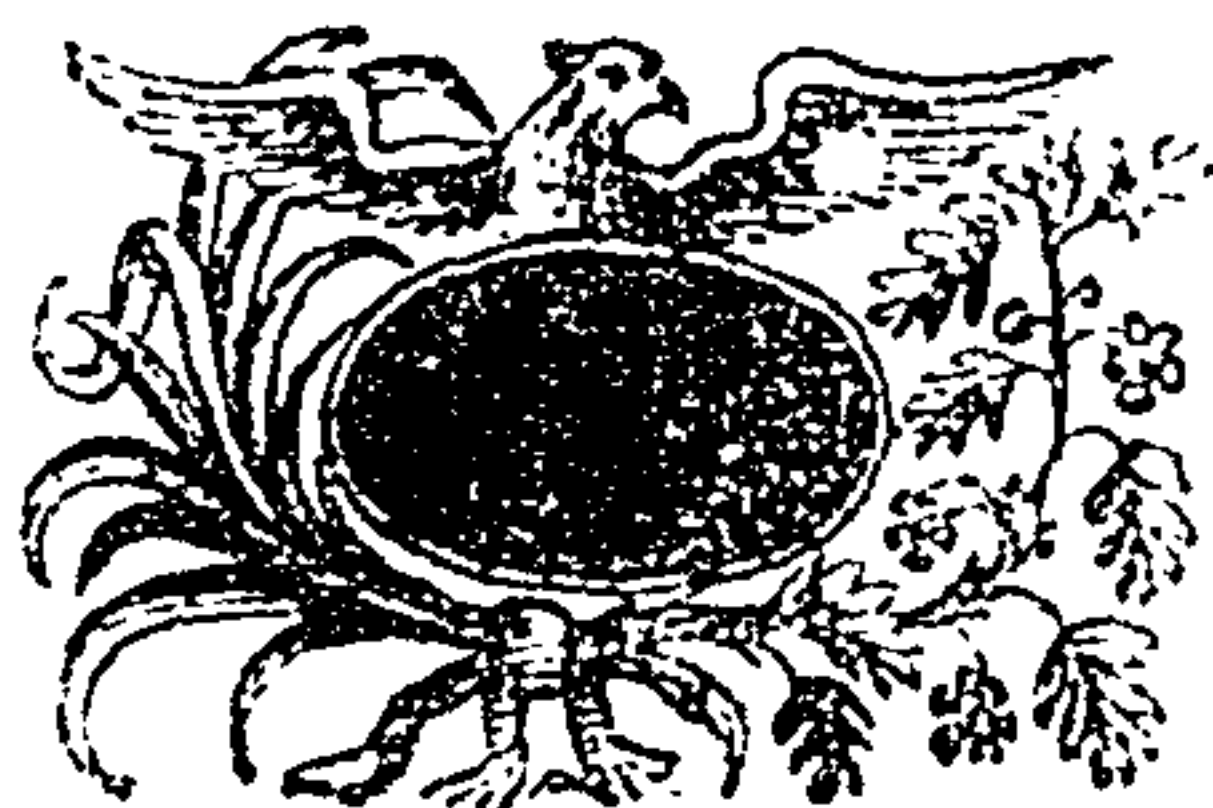


FABLE LI.

The Kingfisher and the Sparrow.

AS a Kingfisher was sitting beneath the shade, upon the banks of a river, she was surprised on a sudden by the fluttering of a Sparrow that had eloped from the neighbouring town, to visit her. When the first compliments were over, How is it possible, said the Sparrow, that a bird so finely adorned can think of spending all her days in the very depth of retirement! The golden plumage of your breast, the shining azure of your pinions, were never given you to be concealed, but to attract the wonder of beholders. Why then should you not endeavour to know the world, and be at the same time, yourself, both known and admired? You are very complaisant, at least, replied the Kingfisher, to conclude that my being admired, would be the consequence of my being known. But it has sometimes been my lot, in the lonesome valleys that I

frequent, to hear the complaints of beauty that has been neglected ; and of worth that has been despised. Possibly it does not always happen, that even superior excellence is found to excite admiration, or to obtain encouragement. I have learned besides, not to build my happiness upon the opinion of others, so much as upon self-conviction, and the approbation of my own heart. Remember, I am a Kingfisher ; these woods and streams are my delight ; and so long as they are free from winds and tempests, believe me, I am perfectly content with my situation. Why therefore should I court the noise and bustle of the world, which I find so little agreeable to my native disposition ? It may be the joy of a Sparrow to indulge his curiosity, and to display his eloquence. I, for my part, love silence, privacy, and contemplation ; and think that every one should consult the native bias of his temper, before he chooses the way of life in which he expects to meet with happiness.





FABLE LII.

The Bee and the Spider.

ON the leaves and flowers of the same shrub a Spider and a Bee pursued their several occupations : the one covering her thighs with honey ; the other distending his bag with poison. The Spider, as he glanced his eye obliquely at the Bee, was ruminating with spleen on the superiority of her productions. And how happens it, said he, in a peevish tone, that I am able to collect nothing but poison from the self-same plant that supplies thee with honey ? My pains and industry are not less than thine ; in those respects we are each indefati-

gable. It proceeds only, replied the Bee, from the different disposition of our nature ; mine gives a pleasing flavour to every thing I touch, whereas thine converts to poison, what by a different process had been the purest honey.

THE END.



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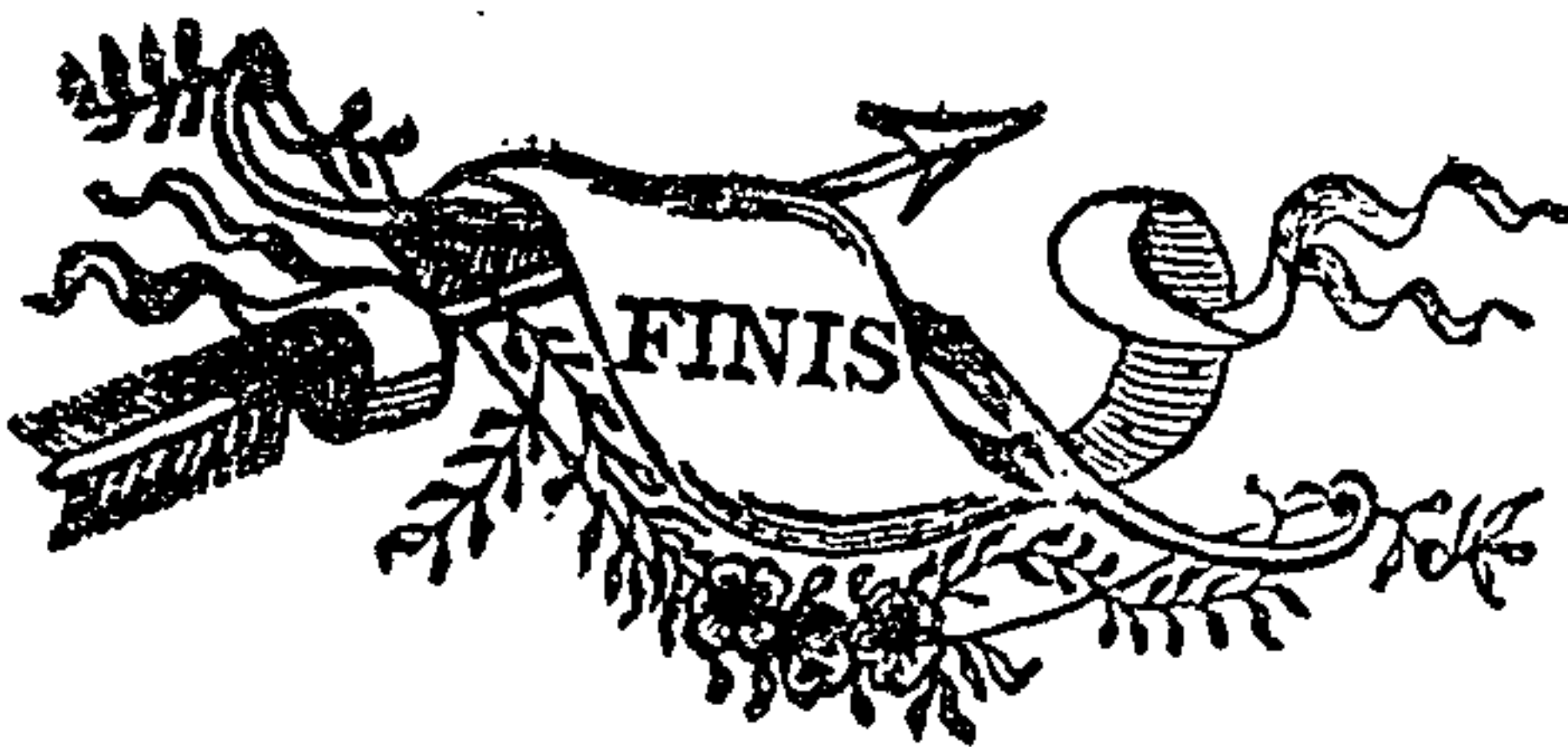
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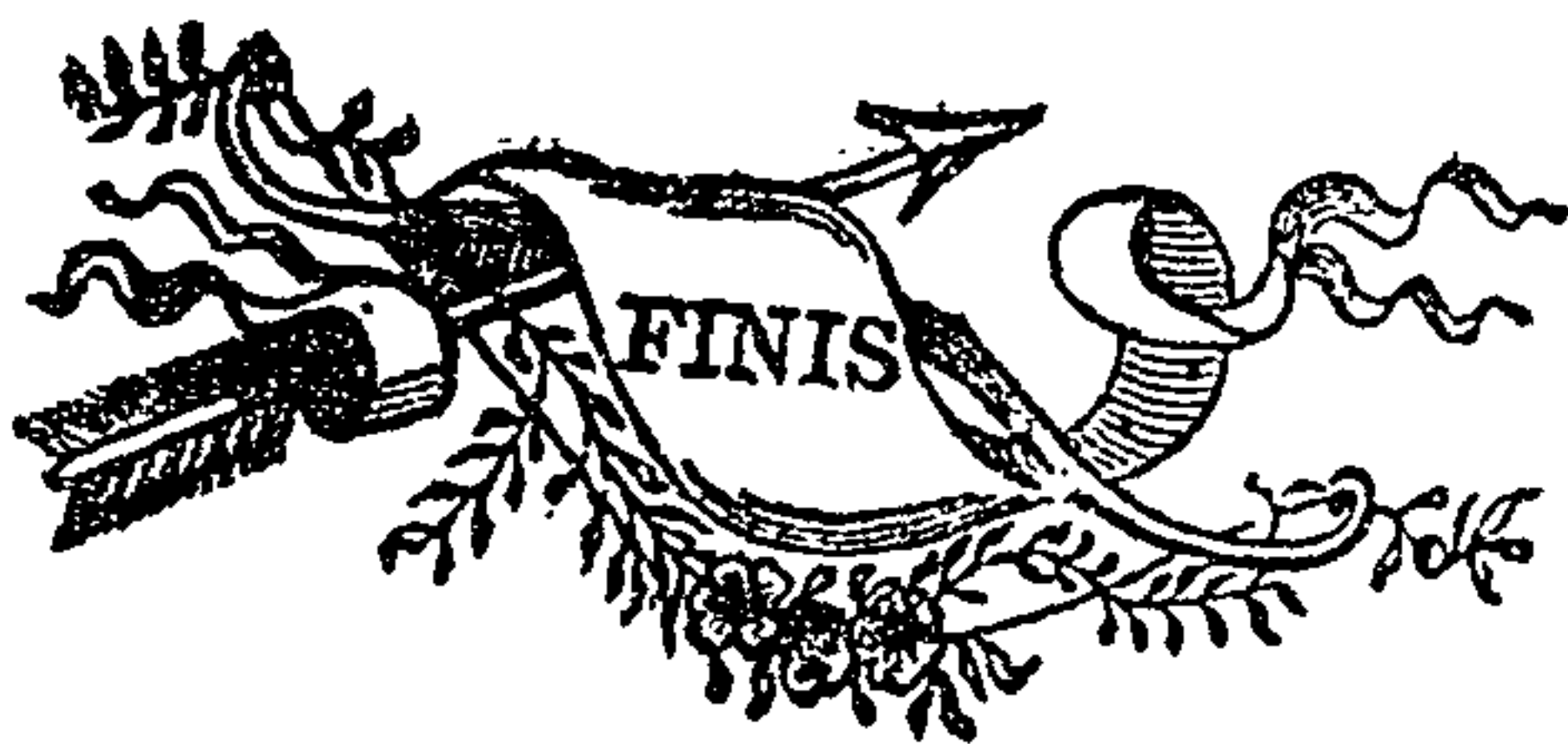
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